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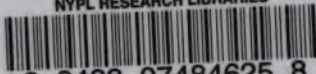
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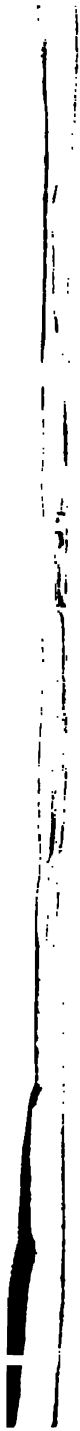
OLYMPIC VICTOR



JAMES B. CONNOLLY



1758



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Lifted him up bodily and stood him up where was the King

AN
OLYMPIC VICTOR

A STORY OF THE MODERN GAMES

BY
JAMES BRENDAN CONNOLLY

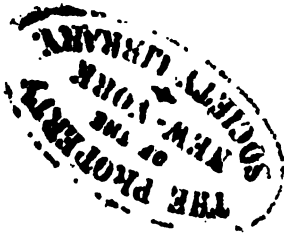
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1908
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Published August, 1908



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ILLUSTRATIONS

Lifted him up bodily and stood him up where was the King	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
Tourists from all the world were visiting Athens	16
A noise as of a shutter softly turning	36
Dreams that were peopled altogether with heroic figures	46
A trial race—A hot morning, the road lay deep with dust	68
Three paces away she stood, leaning against a tree	98
Athens lay before them	148
Glory to Greece! Was it not magnificent!	166

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3
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AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

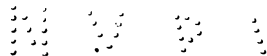


AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

I

EURIPIDES, the lame shoemaker of Marousi, noted throughout the province for his willingness to talk at any time on the ancient customs of his once great country, was lately returned from a holiday trip to Athens and yet afire with the enthusiasm for the great festival to come.

One should know Euripides, whom all who knew loved. Lame, as has been said, but seeming not to be hindered in his agility thereby, being quick in his movements as some little field-creature, ever hopping back and forth, never still of legs or arms, unless it were while he was glued to his bench executing the orders which, be-

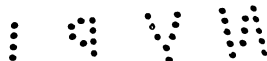


AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

cause of his rare repute, he could not avoid; or unless it were in those silent hours of the night when, the unavoidable work for the day ended, he drew forth the old volumes from which, sometimes, he would not stir till daybreak.

And now was Euripides, neglecting the work which was merely his bread and butter for the matters that were his very life, mounted on a bench beneath the olive tree not far removed from his little shop, and declaiming after his vehement fashion of the great graces that were to be the portion of his country in the near future.

“Here is the *Echo* of this morning,” and he flourished the newspaper aloft. “Listen to what it says.” He readjusted his horn-rimmed spectacles which would never stay for long on his little concave nose. “Know ye that these games are to be on a scale of such grandeur as would not have disgraced the festivals of our illustrious ancestors in



AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

their proudest days. On the next, the seventy-fifth anniversary of that great day whereon was acknowledged our freedom from the yoke of the Turkish tyrant—on that great day will prayers be offered in all the churches, and feasts be celebrated throughout the land and also will a grand reception be tendered to the guests from afar. From all over the world the competitors will come and on this day they shall be made to feel how great is our sense of the honor they pay us in coming. There will be a parade, the same to follow the line of the walls that surrounded the ancient violet-wreathed city, and, afterward, speeches and toasts and a banquet in the Chamber of Deputies. On the second day will be held the first of the competitions in the Stadium, in the short running race, the triple leap and the throwing of the discus—these being the games that have come down from our ancestors. On the day after, the

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

athletes will contest in the more modern games, the high leap, the single long leap, the shot-putting and the eight hundred and fifteen hundred metres. On the third day will be contested the gymnastics, the contests on the horizontal bars, the rings, the horse, and the merely muscular efforts, the lifting of heavy weights and so on. On the last day—after again some modern events—the hurdle race and pole-vaulting—and now this the best of all—and to this listen carefully”—the voice of Euripides filled in volume—“on the last day will be contested the glorious race from Marathon to Athens, in which the youth of Greece are expected to uphold the honor of their ancient race.”

“But, Euripides, what are the prizes?” demanded a voice.

“The prizes? Ah”—the shoemaker deftly caught his falling spectacles—“the prizes? Of a value commensurate. A branch of wild olive from the trees of old Olympia;

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

or, it may be—a wreath from the classic grove by the ancient sacred temple will for true athletes be the prize sought. But, in deference to the spirit of modern life, there will be for each victor a magnificent diploma, a design of noble conception and supreme execution. The artists of all the world have been appealed to and the reward made of such substance as to tempt the highest. Supplementary to the wreath and diploma will be a medal of pure silver and chaste workmanship, such a memento as a man will be proud to hand to his posterity, although in itself not of extraordinary value—a thousand drachmæ in gold will be its cost. And then a bust of “Victory” by the hand of our foremost sculptor, and—but indeed I cannot say—there are so many. But greatest of all, of course, will be the appreciation of one’s fellow-citizen—the gratitude of one’s country.

“And for all this”—resumed Euripides—

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“is constructed a Stadium. And such a Stadium! See here is the plan”—he displayed the spread page of the *Echo*—“only last week I myself beheld it. A priceless morning—a moving breath from the Ægean Sea and from the South—a sun like a benediction. On the sight of Athens’ Stadium of old it stands, on that same historic spot about which sat in olden days and watched the athletes contending, the illustrious ones of our race. There on the banks of the Illisus our people have created such a structure as would stir to immortal strains the reincarnated lyre of great Pindar himself. Of walls on the outside of four hundred paces length one way, and a hundred and twenty another, and this ground-plan enclosed to the height of a man’s head of solid marble, and of a depth ere the seats begin of another man’s length, and all this of dazzling Pentellic marble—of marble white and gleaming as the marble of the temple of Athena—not as we

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

see it now," and Euripides turned and pointed to where on the crest of the Acropolis the ruins of the Parthenon arose. "Not as we see it now, with the o'ercasting gray of many centuries. Not so, but white as the original snow of the mountain peaks of the north. I say to you, my people"—the fiery Euripides extended his hands as if invoking the blessing of Jupiter, "I say to you——"

"O Euripides, O Euripides," came a voice from the edge of the crowd, "here is one who has been long knocking at your shop-door. He wishes a pair of slippers. He says that if you do not come soon——"

The rest of the message was lost in the shuffling of the crowd which, spellbound for the moment under the thrall of Euripides' enthusiasm and the interest of a subject that was beginning to appeal to every Greek, were now departing from the shade of the olive tree. "Dear me, dear, me" sighed Euripides, folding his *Echo*, wiping his

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

glasses, and stepping down and across the road to his shop.

“What is it?” he demanded, not unamicably, of the youth at the door of the shop.

“My master wishes two pairs of slippers. Here are the requirements of one pair. They are to be of the very best tanned goat-skin, with the red and blue close-stitches in blue and gold on the instep, with eyelets silver plated, and so on.” The messenger read from his instructions and Euripides stopped him.

“Give me the paper. I will scan it for you. I have no greater leisure. It is always business that one is interested in. Always business in these days. It was not so in ancient times. It is for the tourist for whom”—addressing the messenger—“the slippers? Doubtless some tourist with more curiosity than learning, some awkward Englishman or fly-away Frenchman, or perhaps some rich American poking his nose among the ruins with his ‘What did

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

cost—and how much for this?’ or ‘Are you sure this is the oldest on record?’ Dear me, dear me, ’twas not so in other days. For what sort of tourist did you say?”

“For no tourist, but for one of our own nation—and wealthy, too. He is Vanitekes of Megara.”

“Megara? Megara? Boy, you talk almost of great matters—great people.”

“Yes, ’tis his father who owns so many herds of sheep.”

“Sheep? Sheep? Who spoke of sheep? What are they? Are sheep mentioned in the ancient histories? No, boy, except as sacrifices. But Megara is nigh to Salamis Bay, and do you know what Salamis means? Come now—what happened at Salamis?”

“Why, I am not certain, but did not our forefathers fight a great fight near there?”

“Fight a great fight there! Great Pindar, hear him! A great fight! Why, there were more than four thousand ships and two mil-

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

lion five hundred thousand fighting men of the Persians. And our great Admiral consulted the oracle—and what said the oracle? ‘Wooden walls,’ said the oracle, and what did wooden walls mean, boy? Tell me now—what?”

“M-m—Ah, yes—there was a wooden horse at ancient Troy——”

“A wooden horse at ancient Troy! Aye, and a wooden head at modern Marousi, and ‘tis yours. ‘Wooden walls,’ boy, meant ships. And ships we built and for weeks succeeding that most glorious conflict the bodies of the slain Persians choked the waters of the bay. And that was twenty-four centuries ago—almost. Four hundred and eight years before the cradle of Bethlehem, and that was nineteen hundred, lacking four, years ago. ‘Wooden walls,’ said the oracle. Remember it henceforth.”

“And will the shoes be ready in the morning?”

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“Oh, the shoes! Yes, tell your master yes. Even now I have almost ready a pair that will suit. Will you call for them?”

“Not I.”

“Not you? Then who, you wooden horse of Troy—who?”

“Vanitekes himself. He has heard of your skill and wishes also that you make for him a pair of shoes for the long race in the Olympic Festival.”

“Ah-h—he will enter for the Marathon race, then?”

“He has already entered.”

“Already? Already entered for the Marathon run and comes from near Salamis? Indeed, though I know not this Vanitekes, yet I even now almost love him. What does he look like? Is he tall? And long of limb? Does he stride freely as he walks? And is there courage in his eye? And does he hold a high reverence for the traditions of old Greece?”

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

“I don’t know how he stands for Greece, but he is tall, dark and strong, and orders people about as if they were his slaves.”

“H-m—plays the master? But that may be his youth. And this Vanitekes will be here in the morning? Well, tell him I shall be waiting him and get along, you who know not the mechanical windings of a wooden horse from the list of a noble trireme.”

II

AT this season of the year, when numberless tourists from all the world were visiting Athens and its environs, Euripides was kept busy with special orders of this kind. Altogether too busy at times, he thought, who liked his holidays as well as any tourist. An enthusiast by temperament, by imagination an artist, and therefore bound to become deeply skilled in whatever line of work he gave attention, Euripides had made a great name for turning out fancy slippers, such a name that the merchants of Athens gladly paid him prices far above the average. Seven and eight drachmæ in gold, even more in special cases, were prices paid Euripides for a pair of slippers which to the casual eye were hardly better looking or better made than many for which others of

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

his trade could get but three or four drachmæ. But it was for the discriminating eye that Euripides worked, and he worked late this night, which caused him to arise at such an hour next morning that, the stickiness of sleep yet barely out of his eyes and his shop-door hardly thrown open, he was greeted by a bold, confident voice.

“Euripides, is it not?”

“It is.”

“You are making a pair of slippers for me—Vanitekes of Megara?”

“They are made.”

“You are prompt.”

“No more prompt than I promised.”

“You are quick with your tongue.”

“Not quicker than with my bill, which you will find in one of the shoes.”

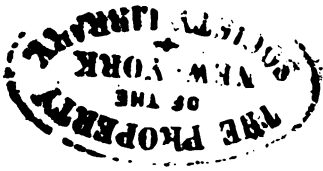
“Right or left?”

“A bill, if properly presented, can only go to the right shoe.”

“True, here it is—but in the left shoe.”



Tourists from all the world were visiting Athens.



BOOK
MARK

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“Which in this case must be the right shoe, since you’ve found it.”

“H-m—you cling obstinately to your point. Let me see—ten drachmæ—they should be good shoes.”

“If they are not, you are free to return them and the money is yours again.”

“I return no shoes to Euripides. I wish to look my best, for to-day I call on—but possibly you know him—Anninoe Perigord, of this village?”

“I know him, as I knew his dead wife and his parents and her parents and their grandparents before them.”

“And you know Anninoe’s daughter Marie?”

“I do.”

“Then you know also that she is beautiful?”

“You who are to call on her should know that.”

“But it is four years since I have seen

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

her. She was then very young. She has changed in that time, no doubt."

"H-m—you would inquire of me her repute now, thinking it may be that no one should better know what is going on than old Euripides, who has time to listen to all the village."

"You judge me harshly. It is merely that already my boy has heard that she comes to visit you, her friend."

"H-m— And you would hear what changes four years have made. Well, she has, she——"

"Yes—yes——"

"Well, from a girl of fourteen she has grown to be a woman of eighteen."

"You are making fun of me, old man."

"H-m— And you see only fun in that? God help you. And you are to call on her, you say?"

"I am recommended to her father by my father. Here is the letter."

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“Better to be recommended to herself, I should say—and with more than letters.”

“Why? Is she proud as that?”

“No prouder than a good girl should be.”

“And she is beautiful, you said?”

“I did not say. But I say it now—there is no harm in it—she *is* beautiful, and more than beautiful——”

“How more than beautiful—she is rich?”

“No, no, not rich—and yet not poverty-stricken.”

“Well, what matters it? I am rich enough, or shall be when my father dies.”

“The saints forbid.”

“H-m—so say I. But he will have to go in time.”

“That is true. But say no prayers to hurry him. We old people have not much—wish us life then, while we care for it. But I talk so much. You wish a second pair of shoes?”

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“I do—for practice for the great race—and as the price does not matter, they must be of the best.”

“They shall be of the best—the best of old Euripides at least. Rest your foot here and I will take your measure.”

“Here is the measure already taken.”

“Ps-st—I take my own measure. Yours will do for shoes to go visiting young ladies, but these are to be shoes for the Marathon race, and for that one must be careful—all Greece will offer prayers for you.”

“So? And what chance have I?”

“I cannot say. I do not know you sufficiently. And yet you should do well. You are tall and strong, even as the boy said, and there is determination expressed in your face, and lightness in your movements, but it will take more than even all that to win the great race.”

“More than strength and stride, wilfulness of spirit and lightness of foot? Certainly, old

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

man, you do not encourage me much. What more does it take?"

"To win the Marathon run from all the world will take heart and soul above all other things—a soul to inspire, a heart to endure what the inspiration impels."

"And have I not heart and soul? Do you know what they call me at home? The Goat. Yes, the Goat. And, why, old man, that sly grin—why?"

"Goats are great creatures for blindly butting."

"Blindly butting! Pshaw, no—but because I can scale the crags——"

"Ha, ha——"

"You are making fun of me. If you were wiser, you would be more careful."

"H-m-m-m— Wise I never was, and careful—it's not my nature. But when do you wish the shoes? To-morrow morning? They shall be ready. Good-morning, and barring one, I wish you all luck."

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“And that one—does he run, too, in the race?”

“I do not know. It is likely that he has no thought of it.”

“And you will make shoes for him?”

“If he wishes, I shall.”

“Even better than mine?”

“Hardly that. I am giving you of my best. You paid the best price and I give you my best shoes.”

“But if you could make a better for him?”

“Be sure I would then—better than for a king. He is my godchild and I love him.”

“That is all right, but you should not put it to my teeth as you do. However, if I meet this favorite of yours in the race, you shall see how I shall beat him.”

“It may be—it may be. Indeed I think it likely, for, as we agreed, you are strong and tall and light of foot, and you have the ambition, which he has not. But as I said before, heart and soul are also needed, and

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

the great heart and soul, they rarely attend the boastful spirit. Good-morning to you.”

“Good-morning.”

“A bold youth that,” mused Euripides. “Bold, bold, and he should run well. Boastful and yet strong and not ill-looking in a girl’s eyes. Ah, well—” and turned to his bench.

But in a moment he stood up again, and from the door gazed after this Vanitekes, who was taking the road with such insolent strides, and continued to gaze until the stranger had surmounted and was lost to sight beyond the crest of the hill when, stepping within his shop again, Euripides consulted a calendar which hung above his bench and on which was one date marked in red. On that he laid his forefinger—“Three, four, five—in a few days now his term of service will be up.” After a moment’s thought he resumed his bench, but presently, as if something still troubled him, he began to sigh, “Poor Loues—poor Loues!”

III

THE week which saw the advent of Vanitekes in Marousi saw also the discharge of Loues from the army. He had left the white-marbled Athens behind him and had come in the late afternoon to his own village of Marousi, to the public square, on the farther side of which now was Euripides, characteristically engaged.

Approaching the square Loues saw him, saw the queer little figure come hopping across the road to the bench under the olive tree, and while yet a hundred paces away could hear him declaiming of the greatness of the ancient Greece to whomsoever had time to stop and listen. In a quiet village like Marousi there are always many who have the time to hearken to speeches of any kind, and many of these were listening now,

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

some with a great appearance of interest, even after he had done with the glories of other days and was descanting on the news of the present.

Loues did not present himself to Euripides then, even though it was six months since his godfather had visited him in barracks; this because the old man had become deeply engrossed in his subject and was holding his audience in such good humor that to interrupt him then were to interfere with one of his greatest passions; and so after a pause on the edge of the crowd, the lad held on to the home of Marie.

Now though it was two years since Loues had last set eyes on Marie, yet he was backward in approaching her. He knew not why, but so it was. Hence, instead of repairing at once to her home, he walked back and forth on the hillside nearest that part of the village, in the hope that some business or other would bring her outside. But nothing like

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

that happened, and after an hour or more of dilly-dallying he made bold to approach the house. It was dusk then—it was possibly the falling darkness that lent him courage—and in the night-shades as he neared the cottage he passed a stranger, a young man, tall and free-striding. Something impelled Loues to turn and look after him, and, looking, he found that the other had also turned and was returning the scrutiny. They were, perhaps, ten paces apart, a trifle farther it might be than men might well measure one another in the after-twilight, and hence it was difficult for Loues to determine just what manner of man this was, whether from the north, the south, Larissa, Trikala, Messenia, or where; whether he was dark or light, ill-looking or handsome; but certainly he was of resolute bearing, a tall man who stood firmly yet lightly on his feet; an exterior that should have made for an attractive man. And yet something about him there was which Loues did not like.

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

Troubled in mind, Loues continued on his way. In a moment he was at Marie's door. He knocked, but so timidly that he had to knock again ere the bolt was drawn and the door swung back. It was Anninoe Perigord himself, Marie's father, and there being no light within, he evidently could not at once make out his visitor, but saying, "What, back again, Vanitekes? Welcome indeed, welcome, my friend from Megara"—whereat Loues said, "It is not Vanitekes of Megara, but Loues—Loues of Marousi," and stepped within.

"Oh!" said Anninoe in disappointment, and then more heartily, "Welcome, lad, welcome," and in the next breath, "Who would know—you have shot up so! And how have you been?"—and so on, and gave Loues a seat, and rolling a cigarette, offered that also to him.

Loues took the cigarette, and though he never in all his life up to that hour had smoked

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

one, except to take a pull or two of one when a young boy, and that out of curiosity merely, yet he now smoked this because it was Marie's father and he craved any excuse whatever to linger until he should see Marie.

Now Loues liked Marie's father, though he understood little of what mind the father held toward himself. He felt that the father knew what he would be at, although never in their lives had Marie or himself spoken—nay, nor even hinted, after the manner of many young people, at love. Even at this time it was not so much claiming Marie's love that troubled him as that he desired to be near her. When he was near her he knew that he forgot everything else, when away from her that nothing went right. Of late he had become a changed youth, never still, quick to lose his temper; they used to say of him that he was the most restless man in his regiment. And now he was restless to see her of whom he had had no sight for so long.

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

He heard her step on the stairs at last. An hour he thought it must have been since he came in, but looking down he saw that his second cigarette was not yet consumed and knew that scarce two minutes had passed. He had been puffing furiously, especially when he heard her descending step on the stairs. The partly-opened door swung back, and for the first time in two years he saw her.

She had sprung half a head taller, and was much larger every way. Where before was a child's slimness was now a young woman's roundness; and yet not large or bulky—and her beauty had flowered like a rose-bush in May, and thereafter it needed not the cup of oil to light the room for Loues—through the gloom her eyes shone on him, and nothing else did he care to see.

There was no lover's greeting between the two; for there had never been a word of love spoken between them. When Loues left home she was but a slender girl, and he

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

had no thought of what love was, nor had she; but now Loues knew that whatever Marie thought, he would never be at ease again till he knew Marie loved him.

Nor was there any chance to speak of love that evening, even though they had been both so minded; for, ere he had become well accustomed to her presence, her father, inventing some shrewd pretext or other, sent her on an errand upstairs, from which apparently she should have soon returned; but she did not return. Her father, excusing himself, shortly followed after, and returning in a few minutes said, "All day Marie complained that she is tired; she will go to bed, she said, and made me bid you good-night for her."

In the good-night was no hint that he should call again, and Loues' heart fell, for in other days she had been kind enough.

In silence then they sat, the father and Loues, for a space of perhaps five minutes

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

again, he filling his long-stemmed pipe the meanwhile, and passing his tobacco and paper with which Loues essayed to roll a cigarette, and, having made it, bunglingly enough, to smoke it though it might choke him; for he had no mind to leave the house so long as there was kin of Marie to whom he could talk.

“Loues,” said Anninoe suddenly, and only the glow of the tobacco-bowl to mark his position in the darkness, “Loues, how old are you?”

In the heart of Loues were dim forebodings, but he answered with calmness, “Twenty-one—nearly.”

“H-m—almost twenty-one? And have you ever thought of what you are going to do?”

Loues had not, and so said; and saying it, was of a mind to add that in Marousi it never seemed to occur to the young men to plan for their future living—they took whatever came

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

along. And some were luckier than others. Loues even hinted of that last thought to the glaring spark in the darkness.

“H-m-m—” sniffed Anninoe, evidently without even removing his pipe from between his lips. “And did you ever think you might like to marry?”

“Why, n-no, sir.”

“What!” snapped Anninoe; and thereby understanding that the answer surprised Marie’s father, Loues ingenuously began to explain that of course everybody married in time, and doubtless he should in time; but now, only this very hour, he had been thinking, and——”

“But,” Anninoe quickly interrupted, “that’s it, you have thought of marrying; but what have you ever done to show that you had any thought of the future in your head? Nothing. What are you even now? No more and no less than you have been all your life—an idler. Aye, all your life hunt-

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

ing and fishing over the mountains, singing and carolling, with no more thought of what was to become of you than the birds in the trees above you, or the wild game you hunted in the woods about you. Once when you might have done something, when Simonides, the rich merchant, a friend of your dead father and of me, offered through the love of his dead friend to make something of you, what did you do then? Nothing, but ran off to the army. Is it not so?"

"It is true, but everybody thought at the time there would be war with the Turks, and Greece had need of men."

"War? And was there war?"

"But how was I to know?" asked poor Loues

"How were you to know? It matters not. What we do know," thundered Anninoe, "is that you are a soldier and upon a soldier's pay. If any silly girl were foolish enough to marry you, she might be able, if

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

she were a careful and provident wife, to buy shoes upon your pay."

"But I am no longer a soldier. My time has expired, and here is my discharge. It is an honorable discharge," and Loues drew it out and tendered it toward the glowing pipe in the darkness. But from behind the pipe came only a pitying laugh, and again after the pause, the voice, saying, but now with a shade of softness, "and only a boy's thoughts are in your head. Put aside all thoughts of marrying until you have something to show in the way of worldly goods, or some prospect of being able to support a wife."

And so Loues left him, without having had with Marie that private word in hope of which he had walked sixty miles that day.

IV

LOUES went out into the night and, much after the fashion which Marie's father said was his crime, heedlessly wandered over the great hill near Marousi. But it grew so lonesome at last that he came back to the village, having in mind to seek out his godfather, but also to pass Marie's house again on the way.

As he drew near, he saw, to his surprise, that a light was streaming through the windows, which impelled him to pause at the corner of the paling which surrounded the house. From there he could see her father and a stranger—the stranger, tall, spare but broad-shouldered—the dark and wilful-looking young man. He and Marie's father seemed now to be chatting like old friends. Even as Loues stood there disconsolate he

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

heard the young man ask, "But your daughter, is she not coming back?"

"Aye, she will come," and raising his voice, the father called, "Marie, O Marie!"

"Yes, father," and then Loues made off. But he came back when the lights were gone, except one which streamed out on the porch, and by that he saw Marie and the tall young fellow,—or their shadows perhaps it might be more truthfully said—but enough of her head was in the light to disclose that in her hair was a red rose, stuck above her ear; and he was bending over her, a little more closely than Loues liked, and once more he ran away, now in a rage. And yet again he came back, and this time, everything being dark, he lingered, and presently for very lonesomeness began to whistle an old air, very popular with the army—"Sons of Greece" 'twas called, an invocation to the younger and more daring spirits of the country, and as he whistled came a noise as of a



A noise as of a shutter softly turning.

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shutter softly turning. "Anninoe Perigord," said Loues to himself, and (another look to where Marie's room might be) was about to make off when he felt something fall lightly on his upturned face—once, and then again something, and he groped at his feet and found them, not knowing then what they were, except that one felt flower-like and the other satiny, clinging to the fingers, nor did he discover until he came to the lighted shop-window of Euripides, when he saw that he held in one hand a red rose, and that the other token was a small blue and white rosette—and blue and white were the colors of Greece. And, too confused then to put interpretation on them, his heart beating wildly he ran into the shop of his godfather, who seemed to be wondering whether he had best have another look at the *Echo* and read further of the programme for the coming Olympic Games, or retire.

If one could have seen the face of Euripi-

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

des when he saw the lad! "Loues, Loues!" he called, and opened wide his arms. "Ah, but how long you have been away from your old godfather! But you look dejected. What is it, my Loues?"

"Oh, nothing, godfather, nothing."

"Oh, nothing, and you say it as if your very heart were bursting. Out with it. Am I not your godfather?"

"Truly you are that, and more. You are my father himself now and my best friend."

"Then what is it?"

"Well, this morning my time was up in the army and there being no train till night, I left for home, stopping at Athens only long enough to drink a cup of chocolate and eat a bit of bread. This evening I arrived here. I went at once to see Marie, but 'twas her father I saw most of. He told me to give up all hope of her."

"And Marie, Loues, what did she say?"

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“She said nothing, but looked at me as she passed from the room. From her look at departing I gathered but slim hope and from her voice, as she said good-night, small comfort. But from beneath her window as I came away—these. What does it all mean?”

On his Socratesian nose Euripides replaced the horn spectacles to get a better look at what Loues held. “H-m—a red rose, and the colors of your country. H-m—Loues, she gives you these, and yet you lament. Loues, truly you will always be a boy, as her father has often said while you were away. Love and country, and yet you lament.”

“Love? You think that, godfather? If I could but discover this was the same rose she wore in her hair.”

“And if ’twas?”

“It would mean that she cares for me and will yet marry me, or she has become in two years a loathsome coquette.”

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“Why, Loues, such talk?”

“Does a young girl wear roses in her hair while talking to a young man, one who is favored by her father—and, who knows? maybe by herself, too—and who would be, it may be is, her accepted lover? Would she wear any rose in her hair at such a time—the shades of night, the added shadow of an arbored porch—unless that rose was given by a lover?”

“By one who *would* be her lover, Loues.”

“Who *would* be then—but what matters your correction if she accepts and wears the rose?”

“Ps-s-t—what an intolerant child you’ve become since the army. Loues, Loues, would you have her inhuman? Like fire to you and frost to all else? The loveableness that has won you you condemn the practice of. Can’t she be warm-hearted and virtuous too? Would you have a young girl refuse a rose when a young man offers it?”

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“And wear it in her hair, stuck above her ear?”

“Where else would she stick it, inside her ear? Tut, tut, my Loues.”

“Then you *do* think ’twas Vanitekes gave it?”

“Who knows? And what if he did?”

“There—if he did—’twas his rose, by what right does she give it to another?”

“Even to you, her old playmate?”

“Even to me, godfather, but no longer her old playmate.”

“H-m—” Euripides pondered. “H-m—there is something in that.”

“Surely, godfather, what one lover gives, to another lover must not be given. Not by a good girl, at least.”

“H-m— Then the rose you hold there, Loues, was never plucked by Vanitekes, for Marie is a good girl. I know her. Hardly a day during all the time you have been away that she did not come in to see me, to

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

talk with me, and an old man doesn't see a maid every day but if a change should come he would see that too. Have no fear, Marie is the same Marie that you knew."

"But has she been here every day since the coming of this Vanitekes?"

"Why, no, but that is but a few days."

"Then it is not me she loves, nor is it me she will marry."

"No, it is true, she may never marry you, then what?"

"Then she is a coquette."

"Tut, tut, she may love you and be no coquette and yet never marry you. There is her father to consider. His views must influence a young girl. Love is beautiful, but life must be sustained. And this other youth, don't doubt but what he has passion too. What do you intend to do, Loues? You wrote me of certain wild notions. Tell me your plans."

"I do not know how. I thought of going

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

to Piræus and there sign for a voyage to some other country. There are ships for America, where——”

“Ps-s-t—child—remain at home. Sit by me. Draw near the light and listen.”

Euripides picked up the newspaper that had dropped to the floor and began to read. And Euripides was ever a masterly reader. Loues' eyes became moist and his cheeks colored. So noticeable was the effect that Euripides could not but see it. He dropped the *Echo* and laid a hand on the boy's shoulder.

“And do you see now, Loues, what I would be at with you? The Marathon run—for the honor of Greece—what do you think, Loues?”

Whereat Loues exclaimed: “Why, the Colonel of my regiment spoke of something like that before I came away. 'Twas I, godfather, carried the long messages—eighty, a hundred, even more—sometimes one

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

hundred and twenty kilometres between dawn and dark over the hills."

"And you found it weary work or no, Loues?"

"Why, no, it was but repetition of the long tramps of those days when I had nothing to do but roam the hills, hunting and fishing."

"And what heed did you give your Commander, Loues?"

"I'm afraid, godfather, I had no ears for it."

"No, Marie was filling your poor mind. Well, keep her in your mind. You will but run the better for it. Listen. For years, Loues, you have been preparing yourself for this test, though you did not know it. Tramping over the hills and into the valleys, fishing and hunting, eating sparingly and living cleanly, an image of something unattainable always in your mind, here you are arrived at manhood, with the body of

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

one of Phidias' gods and the mind of a poet. You need only the incentive. Here is everything to hand. Enter for this race, train for it and try for it—you will win, and immortal glory is yours. No man in Greece but will be proud to claim you for his family."

"And I lose, godfather?"

"And you lose? Why, you will be no worse off than now. And if you have made a good try, you are still a man."

Loues stepped to the door of the shop. An instant there and he disappeared into the darkness of the road. Euripides waited patiently. The old man knew that when the lad's mind was in ferment he loved to be where he could see the stars.

After a time, perhaps a half hour, Loues was back by the bench.

"I will make a good try, godfather. I am ready. Shall I start now? It is but eight miles to Athens. I'll be ready for the early morning there."

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“Wait—wait. Not in a minute. Sleep here to-night. And for fear I forget it—in the morning when you set out for the city, take these shoes to Christos, the merchant who has that large shop on Hermes Street—you’ll know it, if there were no other sign, by the tourists, particularly Americans who gather there. And Christos, he fleeces them prodigiously. ‘What matters? If not one, ’twould be another,’ he says. There is owing to me from Christos two hundred drachmæ. Here is the receipted bill. Do not let him put you off. It is not much, but with that you will be able to live in Athens until the race. And now to bed. Tut—tut—what thanks? Are you not my god-child?”

Euripides drew the shutters, locked the door, put out the lights and retired to the back room, where he would have given Loues the cot and himself the floor. “What matters it about me?” explained Euripides. “My old carcass—what harm if it grows



Dreams that were peopled altogether with heroic figures.

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lame? But you—you must keep supple and strong for the great event. The glory of Greece may yet repose in you. Who knows?"

But Loues would not have it so. "The nights I've slept on the mountainside—are they of no account now? Even if we were of one age, you would shame me, who, above all, is proud of it that exhaustion never overcomes him."

"Yet you have been tired enough to sleep many a time, Loues?"

"Ah, but that is different, godfather. One may be so tired that he can sleep standing on a march and yet, if need be, march another hundred kilometres without pausing. Fatigue and exhaustion—they are not the same," and Loues threw himself on the floor, with a sheepskin from the shop for bedding. But not to go to sleep for a long time; and when sleep did at last come to him, it was in the form of dreams that were peopled altogether with heroic figures.

V

THE sun was barely risen next morning when Euripides, after a warm embrace, packed Loues off on the road for Athens. "Your name and fortune are before you. Overtake them." Such confidence did he put into his tones and so influenced was Loues by his text, that a dozen times on the road to Athens he found himself running furiously after people as if his sole business in life thereafter was to convince all strangers that no legs were fleetier or more enduring than his.

And Athens looked gay and bright to him as he entered within its walls that morning.

It was half-past nine, and Loues had finished his business with the merchant Christos, and was turning into the square that faces the royal palace when he over-

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

took a tremendous figure of a man, one who loomed so colossal in the crowd that people after passing him invariably turned to look on him again—even if it were no more than his back they saw. And he was a satisfying sight. A handsome, cheerful face he had, with smiling eyes, gleaming teeth, and a skin deep-bronzed where the great beard did not cover it. This colossus was proceeding much more leisurely than Loues—like one taking the air indeed; and his was plainly a temperament that did not shrink under admiration.

To Loues the wide back was reminiscent. He looked again— “It is—” and running ahead to face the giant—“it is surely—but grown over with huge——”

“Gouskous!” exclaimed Loues.

The great man stared. A second stare— “Ah-h—friend of my youth—my Loues—embrace me.”

“Gouskous, but how you have grown!”

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“Grown? Pff! Was I ever so small?”

“And how strong you look! You have been off with your ship to foreign countries?”

“Yes, my Loues—arrived in Piræus yesterday; but to-day I am free for two months.”

“So? And how is that?”

“The Olympic Games.”

“You, too, Gouskous?”

“Aye, And you, also, Loues? Good—Once more embrace—” which they did, after which Gouskous wiped his perspiring face, and continued: “The Admiral is afire about these games.”

And to get the full effect of his words, one should have seen Gouskous, the giant, gesticulate in that crowded square of Athens. “The Admiral, he never tires of talking of the great games. ‘Gouskous,’ he says to me, or ‘Diagoras’ it may be—according to his humor—and calls me into his private cabin where only the notables go.” Gous-

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

kous touched his friend's shoulder and repeated in a whisper, "Where only the notables go. 'Gouskous,' says my Admiral, and he offers me a glass of wine, very fine wine, my Loues." The eyes of Gouskous glowed. "My soul even now rejoices to contemplate the memorable flavor of it. And showing my extreme satisfaction in the absorbing of it, doubtless, he poured out a second which also I did not refuse, drinking this time to the nation, the first having been to his health—my health, also, by him. Ho, ho, my health, which now I must take care of. Ho, ho, good health, good wine, good food hereafter that we may keep our bodies well nourished for the great strife. Was ever a beautiful invention, short of Heaven itself, more calculated to beatify the soul, Loues——?"

"But what said the Admiral?"

"Ah, yes. He said, 'Gouskous, it is for the honor of the nation to whose health you have drunk. You who are so strong, the

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

strongest man in all the fleet, you must try the discus-throw, the heavy-weight lifting, you must try. What say you, Diagoras?' This Diagoras was a large and divinely shaped victor in the ancient games, I understand, and wondrous powerful. And I said, 'Admiral, my strength it is for my country,' and I raised my hand aloft and—it is true—the tears came surprisingly to my eyes, and my Admiral—great man—leaped to his feet. 'Gouskous,' he said, 'leave of absence for you for sixty days. Enter the games, and if you do well, who knows what rank you may attain in the navy!'

“‘As to rank, my Admiral,’ I answered, ‘it matters not.’ Whereat, he filled me another glass of the wine, and, on my soul, my Loues, it tasted better than the other two. You smile, but no, no—it was not that. They were but small glasses, Loues, not above half-litres each. And so I came to Athens, Loues, and I am even now on the

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

way to the Stadium to see the director. And you, Loues?"

"To the Stadium also. I am to run in the long race."

"Hello! once more embrace me. We go together then. Truly, Loues, a pleasant cruise—naught but fair winds, smooth seas and sunny skies do I anticipate. A most agreeable cruise—stand by, good heart—" and arm in arm, with the giant sailor rolling like a ship in a sirocco, they resumed their way to the Stadium, which presently came into view; and truly at this time, well on toward completion, it well merited the admiration of Gouskous who, fresh from a long sojourn at sea, was stirred before it as by the discharge of a broadside.

"Ah-h—Loues, but this is magnificent! Surely the whole city might sit here without crowding, and of such a completeness! See the black running path level as the deck of the flagship, and these seats of marble,

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

sacredly white, rising tier on tier like rolling billows, high almost as the immense billows of the mighty North Atlantic. And the matchless statuary, and the flagstuffs—all to fly bunting, no doubt, when the time shall come. And look aloft, the one great flagstaff, tall to its top as any maintruck in all the fleet.”

“Aye, Gouskous, from that—I read of it in the *Echo* this morning—from that will fly the colors of the nation of each victor. And should a Greek ever be fortunate enough to win, Gouskous!”

“Should ever, Loues? And why not?”
Gouskous expanded his immense torso.

“With athletes from all the world over trying to wrest the victory from us? Ah, Gouskous, it will be a severe test.”

“Severe? Surely, surely. But what are they who cannot conquer? Hah, Loues, centuries ago did not our ancestors compete on this very spot where we stand, on the

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

banks of this very Illisus? And seated about were the great men of Greece—poets, orators, sculptors, Pindar, Phidias, aye, and Pericles and Æschylus. And such odes! and plays! and statues! Of such excellence that the world has been trying in vain to equal them ever since.”

“My, my, Gouskous, but Euripides would like well to hear you! At whose feet have you been sitting lately?”

“’Twas the Admiral, no less. He said many other things of which I shall recollect another time and tell you. ‘Come back, Diagoras,’ said the Admiral, ‘with the crown of wild olive and the bay of laurel and you shall see, you shall see.’ And with the crown I will come back or burst a blood vessel, my Loues.”

“Hush, here is the director himself.”

To the director they introduced themselves, and in the eyes of that specialist they found favor, more especially the gigantic

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

form of the sailor. "Truly you are tall and strong—as Prince George himself, and he, they call him the strongest man in all Europe."

"H-m—so it is said. It may be true—His Highness and myself *are* of the one height—two metres, lacking four centimetres. But in weight he is comparatively slim, one hundred and ten kilograms, and I one hundred and forty. To be sure, thirty kilos—it is hardly worth discussing."

"And His Highness was in the navy also?"

"Aye. I am in his old ship."

"And on her he was considered the strongest of all in the navy's roster?"

"H-m-m—bar one, I think so."

"And that one?"

Gouskous smiled enchantingly. And the director, looking into the face of Gouskous, smiled also; he could not help it. "And you have been practising with the weights?"

"For three months I have done little else

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

on the Admiral's flagship. My duties have been lightened that I might have time wherein to practise."

"Good. You will go, you and Loues, through the tunnel there and on to the dressing-room, where an attendant will provide you both with a cabinet wherein to disrobe, and clothes for the exercise of the Stadium."

They found the dressing-room of the Stadium to be a marvellously attractive place, consisting of a gravelled court, enclosed by innumerable little booths or closets, over which were hung the flags of various nations which were expected to send contestants to the games (but the flag of Greece always predominating), and in the centre of the court, two long tables, attended by benches of corresponding lengths, and, convenient to either end of the benches, a refreshment booth.

It was this last item which pleased Gous-

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

kous. "Ah-h—" he cooed, and on the spot ordered two bottles of Copenhagen beer of large size. "You will have one?" he asked Loues. "No? Great soul, but you must nourish the body. However, I thought as much; you were ever abstemious. And yet, good beer is good beer—it must not be allowed to go to waste," and placidly drained the second bottle.

"And now for these arduous drills, these exercises of the arena," he announced, and, as if he had been officially appointed to the position, assumed the leadership of the column which filed through the tunnel to the Stadium. It seemed the most natural matter for the others to fall in behind this overshadowing figure.

The candidates divided into various squads and performed the exercises most suited to their ambitions. Loues was one of those who this day were to practise on the road outside of the city, as most nearly resembling the

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

actual labor of the long race to come; and it pleased him that it was the road, to which his feet were well accustomed, rather than the unvarying treading of the track of the Stadium, where it was ever the crunching of the same black cinders under foot, the same sharp turnings at each end, and always the monotony of the rows upon rows of almost empty seats enclosing the track.

Somewhat fatigued was Loues, when, after that first afternoon's exercise, he returned, perspiring, hot, dust-covered, to the dressing-room of the Stadium, where he encountered Gouskous, who, as he failed not to make clear to his friend, had also been hot, perspiring and dust-covered; but now sousing himself under streams of cold running water which poured down from above on his immense person.

Turning his glowing body this way and that, exposing now one shoulder, now the other, again the expansive back, and now

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

holding one mighty leg after the other to the purifying water, Gouskous was delivering himself of the various complaints engendered by the morning's performances.

"Ps-s-t—such toil! Toil? Aye and torture, nothing less. That devil of a director! What does he know of a man's limitations? 'Again,' he said, 'again'—twenty, forty times that 'again' and 'once more,' like some eternal recorder from the lower regions. Ps-s-t—the blood I sweated this day, my Loues, under the rays of the outrageous sun! Like cataracts, like the very stream from the pipes here, it was poured off me as I left the field, but not cool, blessed water like this. Ps-s-t, no! but hot brine down my face and scalding steam down my poor back. Never in the navy did we do such things. Wait till I see my Admiral! D'y' s'pose now he'd countenance such tortures of his favorite seaman? Not the good Admiral."

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“But it is so with all of us the first day, Gouskous. We must do it to accustom the system to the coming strain. Lungs, heart, stomach, the nerves, the muscles, the wind, the very soul——”

“Lungs, nerves? Aye, and so you should for your gentry that are to do such monstrous things—forty-two kilometres is the distance? Whew! ’Tis long enough to think of rowing that distance with twelve good sweeps in a smooth-bottomed gig; but to run it, to lift one leg, so”—Gouskous elevated and lowered one enormous thigh—“and so”—he elevated the other—“for forty-two kilos! I say, also, that you should have tireless wind for such unnatural deeds; but wind for a man who lifts a great dumb-bell, who has only to bring his arm aloft and thence hurl a two-kilogram weight as far as he may? And there—two kilograms! Who invented such a weight? It is like a feather. The noble Phaylos, most renowned of all the

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

discoboli of old, I warrant he never bothered with such a trifle. It is no more than a breath of air in the palm."

"Then you will cast it all the farther, Gouskous."

"Cast what offers no resistance? Ps-s-t, no. Here—" he turned to the attendant—"be good now and pass this towel over my back. These wisps of runners can twist and turn and rub their wand-like bodies, but I can't reach half around. Arms should, by right, be adjusted to one's proportions, but it is never so. It is rather as with ships, the other way. The lean ones carry the longest yards. Come now, like a good fellow. And fear not to lay on."

"But I will bruise the skin."

"Pf-f—fear not for the skin. The winds of five oceans have tanned it."

"And now that we have had our bath Loues—" Gouskous was returning to his dressing booth—"shall we be rubbed with

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

oil, say? And then for something to eat? Yes, something to eat, good heart. Truly it is fatiguing, this training for glory. On my Admiral's flagship there was nothing like it."

VI

IN anticipation of the needs of Greek youth who might wish to take part in the coming Olympic Games, there had been installed at Athens this physical director, already met, as has been described, by Loues and Gouskous, a man acquainted by reason of long residence in other countries with the training methods of the world's greatest athletes; and it was this director who announced one morning that thereafter the candidates for the games were to be overlooked in their exercises by a Board of Judges, and that after another ten days the squad would be reduced to such as were considered of good merit; and therefore that it behooved all to prosecute their exercises with the rigor and skill and self-denial worthy the dignity and importance of the occasion; and that all would have need of every ounce

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

of strength and every shade of skill, for there were coming from all parts of the world great athletes to contend for the unsurpassable glory of the celebration; and further, in a sonorous voice, the director read from the *Echo* of that morning the names and residences of the foreign athletes who had announced their intention of coming: Germany, France, Austria, Italy, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, England, America, and even far-away Chile and Australia.

The reading of the list cast a chill over many; even Gouskous, the self-confident, was subdued. "Truly, Loues, here are mighty men coming to contend with us." And that day in the Stadium he bore himself with solemnity.

Accordingly—thoughtlessly, joyously or seriously—each to his nature prepared for the trials which were to determine who would finally represent the nation.

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

On the tenth day there was great anxiety as the director, when the exercises of the day were done, announced in the order of their event the names of those who had won approval of the judges. Gouskous was among the successful ones; indeed his was the first name read for the discus-throwing and weight-lifting; but the entries for the Marathon race were not to be announced until after a trial to be held within the week.

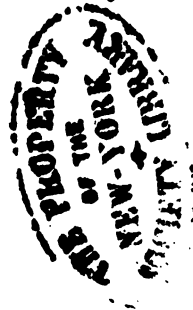
On the morning of that trial Loues could partake of no breakfast, but set out with his companions and arrived with something like a burning fever in his veins. He had been unable to sleep the night before, and felt weak in body as well as dispirited in soul. His mind was not at peace. Not since that discomposing day when he was discharged from the army had he had sight of Marie. Euripides, who had since come twice to Athens to see him, could or would give him

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

no word; and Loues chose to put a hopeless interpretation on his silence.

But even in his weakness Loues, reproaching himself as a man lacking courage, goaded himself to the test which was the last on earth he would have selected for that particular day; and yet, despite what his will was, not to be driven away.

A hot morning, the road lay deep with dust. Everything seemed to conspire against Loues, who had hoped for a cool wind laden with dampness to keep the dust from his lungs, which seemed as if they were on fire within him; but it was not to be. The race was begun and completed, and Loues was almost nowhere. Only on the last kilometre was it, that torn apart with pain and dread, shame and fear, hope and despair, he gathered himself for a burst that carried him past those competitors who would have intervened to prevent him from securing a place on the judge's list; but immediately he



AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

crossed the finishing line he sank to the ground.

It was Gouskous who caught and bore his failing body from the track. "Courage, my Loues, courage!" As the athletes said of him, "A fine friendly nature, a great heart, Gouskous—you should know him." When Loues was somewhat recovered and was able, with the supporting arm of Gouskous, to make his way to the dressing-room, it was the great-souled Gouskous who all the while encouragingly talked to him. "Most marvellous indeed was it, Loues, to see you get the place. Such an effort! 'His heart will burst,' I exclaimed—did I not, Touferes? Only this morning, when I saw you, so pale and distressed, set forth for the tremendous exertion, I shook my head and it was Touferes again to whom I said—was it not, Touferes? 'Poor Loues, all last night he tossed in pain and now in extreme weakness he goes forth to run.' Think of it—



A trial race—A hot morning, the road lay thick with dust.

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AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

nothing to eat since the evening before! Ps-s-t, but how a man can do anything on these empty stomachs is most amazing. For me, I cannot lift a little finger in the morning until after I have abundantly breakfasted. It is too painful altogether. But you, Loues, notwithstanding my calamitous predictions, went forth and you are named among the qualifying runners. 'Twas sublime—hah, was it not, Touferes? and so I say, courage, my Loues, courage. It is true you are yet behind Vanitekes, who has trouble to conceal his pride and joy; but to-day I even heard the director saying as you approached the goal—said he, and pointed you out to his associates, 'Observe that lad. He will be of the chosen ones. There is that in his features which tells me he needs but the occasion to do a great deed.' Yes, so he said, Loues. And so take heart, and be prepared, when the great trial comes."

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

An observing man altogether, that director. That afternoon, after the athletes had lunched and were resting, he said to Gouskous: "Your friend Loues is a promising lad, but he should be encouraged. He does not think enough of himself."

And a wise man also that, for later, when Loues, now partly rested, was reclining on a row of seats in the Stadium, to him came the director, and questioned him as to his previous practice in the way of running. He was a sympathetic man, to whom, seeing that he listened with interest, Loues related the habits of his earlier days, of the days which he had spent in the pursuit of game, flying hot-foot from dawn to dark down the declivities, or surmounting laboriously the steps; and of the nights when he had found himself so far from any habitation that he would make his bed in the open, in the morning bathing himself in the nearest sheet of water, or, it might be, refreshing his body in

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

the dew of the grass. Further, under the encouraging comment of the director, he told of his life in the army; how when they were camping in the country, in Thessaly at one time, far from cities and regular lines of travel, he had been called upon by the commander to carry messages for long distances. "And they used to call me then Ergoteles."

"Why?"

"Euripides—he is my godfather—tells me that Ergoteles was four times crowned victor in the long race in the ancient games."

"Ha? Go on."

"And that for him the great Pindar composed a most moving ode, and that when he returned to Himera they breached the walls about the city that he might not have to enter through the gate used by the ordinary citizen, and that, further, they raised to him a statue in the market-place, as was also done in the groves of Olympia in honor of his un-

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

rivalled prowess, and a pension for life was his, and he died in great honor."

The director's eyes sparkled, and he drew the lad's arm within his own. "Stay by us, Loues, for surely you are possessed of the true spirit. They are to be many, the chance is slight among them all; but who knows, my Loues, that you shall not win?"

An astute man, also, the director. That evening, after all had dined together, in a building set apart for that purpose, midway between the ancient temple of Theseus and the Stadium, and from the windows of which the athletes might gaze their fill on the ruined but ever-glorious Acropolis, he turned to Loues and said, "Have a care for your friend Gouskous. A very Milo of Crete for strength, and in size equal to that Diagoras, after whom he is so often called, but he must be restrained. But for my watchful eye he would have awhile ago gone to the cask in the cellar and helped himself. He may have

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

all the food he craves, but restrain him if you can in his absorption of wine."

A politic man likewise: to Vanitekes he said, "They did not name you The Goat without reason. On you I doubt not will rest the honor of upholding the fame of Greece." And to all he said aloud, "From henceforth we must not fail to train faithfully."

At the table that evening there had been some mirth, largely because of Gouskous, who had become disgruntled. "There, now," he complained, "one measure of wine! A single measure of wine without a single measure of discrimination. Constantine there—estimate now on the bulk of his shrimp-like body. He weighs now—how much? Fifty kilograms? So it is. And I—one hundred and forty kilos. It is true. Yet we get the same ridiculous apportionment. He as much as will drown him if he be not careful, and I, Gouskous, the strong

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

man of our fleet, who has posed for Hercules in the charades, I get no more than what will sprinkle the membrane of my parched stomach, not to speak of the palate and throat which must be assuaged on the way down."

VII

LOUES had now and again seen Euripides during these days of preparation for the festival, and from him had been getting all the neighborly gossip of Marousi; of all but her of whom he was most desirous to hear. And the suspense was affecting him to such an extent that one night he conceived that he could bear it no longer. He would go to Marousi; and because he feared that the director would attempt to hinder him and protest it was a violation of training rules, an imperilling of his chances in the race, he informed no one at the training quarters of his intention.

Not even Gouskous did he tell; this, that the gigantic one might be able to say truthfully in the morning that he knew not where his friend was; and if of his intended action

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

he spoke no word to his friend, be sure he told him nothing of what was in his heart and mind.

But Gouskous was not to be overreached. As Loues was about to drop from the window the big man suddenly awakened from an apparently profound sleep and grasped his nether leg.

“Ps-s-t, be not alarmed! It is only Gouskous. I have been observing thee for several days past. To-night I said to myself, he will do it.”

“Do what?”

“Ps-s-s-t! I know not—I care not, whatever it is. But I have a suspicion.” He laid a finger to his beard and smiled roguishly. “And I would advise thee. Our ship lay three weeks in the roadstead at Bombay and there was one ashore, Loues, as would have— Ah, Loues, the purple days of youth! And overboard I stepped one night—and ruined such a magnificent uniform!

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

Never again did it fit me. And such a tale of accident and adventure as I had to concoct on my return next day! Old Homer himself reeled his recitation out no more smoothly, I'll warrant. And it fitted in all its parts—my story—as—ah-h, if only my blue uniform fitted half so well! But not a word would any one believe, not a word. Ho, ho! Ho, ho! from the youngest apprentice to the Admiral himself. And now, great heart, shall I stand by the window for you? And at what hour? And if you're not returned in time, what shall I say, Loues? Let us agree on a story in case they question us apart. For these objectionable and mostly useless superiors—they do ask questions at times."

All this Gouskous was whispering, but with one detaining arm that would have held back a team of struggling horses. "What shall I tell them if you are not returned by morning, my Loues—and I doubt you will

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

be, because one may drop from a window of this height more easily than he can climb into it, even if you are in a mind to return in time, which is much to be doubted. Ha, you will—good Loues, do think of it. What shall I say in the morning when they ask? It is always one of two reasons, and for you one does not exist. As sparing as any ascetic are you of the wine. And so what girl's name is to be shielded—for so it must be—what else? They will believe so anyway and at once cast about to identify her. Hah, what—don't mistake—I mind not the hot blood of youth if sometimes it bursts bounds, but consider, great soul, consider the work before you; and it is on such as you, not on great-bodied boasters like myself on whom the final honor will fall."

Loues had paused, not to conjure a picture of himself enwrapped in that final honor, but to picture his comrades gathered about the table and of those careless or malicious

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

ones who would only too freely and eagerly pass that word of comment which no girl's name should be allowed to sustain.

Gouskous under the half-light of the night that came from outside, noted the hesitation, even though he misread the motive for it. "Ah, Loues, great soul, but a little sacrifice for now. Stay to-night and to-morrow matters will be clearer. To-morrow the foreign athletes come in large numbers, and by them we will pattern anew, and mayhap discover new devices for our training."

And Loues stayed. And next day the first of the foreign athletes arrived, and from them, as Gouskous had predicted, they learned many things of value. From the American, from one American particularly, Loues learned an important point in training.

The occasion was when Touferes, after noticing his American, French, and Irish rivals leaping, began to comment to Loues

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

on his own chances. Sighing, he observed, "They are stags, Loues. I fear that the glory of Greece is to remain unsung for all of me."

"And for me, also, I think. But the race is yet to be run, and I shall not take their looks for it."

"No, nor will Vanitekes. Look. He watches them all like eagles. Only to-day he said: 'I have learned something,' even in the dressing-room awhile back, and through me he asked all manner of questions of the foreigners. He will profit by to-day's practice. The matter of foot covering was not lost on him, Loues. He will be hard to beat."

"Yes," answered Loues, slowly. "Very hard. And yet it will be a great satisfaction if he wins, for then, also, it will be Greece that wins."

The particular American who had taken a great fancy to Loues, now observing the expression on the young Greek's face, inquired

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

of Touferes what it was that Loues was concerned about, whereat Touferes, the linguist, translated; whereon the American carefully comparing Vanitekes and Loues as the two stood not far apart, said, "Why, that other is a horse. He is of a strong, coarse fibre, built for long, steady, unrelieved labor; but your friend is so much more delicately adjusted—strong also, but so much less gross. He probably does not allow in his training for the extra strain imposed by his more active brain and more ardent soul. That other, as I say, is the work-horse and your friend the thoroughbred. Don't let the other wear him down. He is made, your friend Loues, for less frequent but more supreme efforts. Tell him to ease up in his work."

And it was as much because of this advice as of his example that Loues changed his mode of practice; so that instead of running as formerly every day, except Sunday of course, and each day as far as his system

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

would endure, he now ran only on alternate days and varied the distances. Thus on Tuesday he ran, say, sixteen kilometres, ten miles, on the road; eight kilometres out from the city and back; on Thursday perhaps thirteen kilometres, and on Saturdays, his hard task, twenty-four kilometres. On days between he might walk the seven kilos to the beach at Phaleron, and there lie almost naked in the sun; or if it were a particularly enticing day, take a quick dip in the sea, allowing himself to dry off in the warm sand. Having had always a passion for air, sun, and water, this mode of life seemed to answer perfectly the needs of his nature. He could not say that his speed was increasing, but he felt himself waxing strong as a young lion, which added much to his confidence, and yet he began to feel almost nervous lest the augmented power should pass from him ere the great day arrived.

Now, during all this time of trial and

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

diversion, Loues had been to Marousi but once, and then went on an off-day, in lieu of a walk to Phaleron, and with the express permission of his director, ostensibly to see Euripides in the matter of new shoes for the race, but really more to see Marie. He did not see Marie, but he came away with a pair of shoes of the softest and most flexible kid, patterned after those of the American, and which fitted his feet as gloves fit a lady's hands. It was with these shoes in his hands that he had called at Marie's home, trusting that she would admire them; but he got only a gruff word from her father at the gate, and, despite the beautiful shoes, came away disconsolate.

VIII

THE great festival was drawing near; the athletes were becoming more careful in their training. At last the morning of the first day of the games was on Athens.

The city was alive with visitors. A hundred thousand strangers were within her gates. One may imagine what a commotion they created in the ancient city. At this time of the year, in the late spring, there were always great crowds of people from all the world over, but now the fame of the Olympic Games had perceptibly increased the usual number of tourists. People who otherwise might have stayed a few weeks longer in Turkey, Egypt, Italy or the Holy Land, had hurried to Athens for the Olympic festival.

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

English and Americans were particularly prominent, the English men and women in overheavy, loose-fitting clothes, and the Americans eager, rushing everywhere, with seemingly inexhaustible supplies of energy—likewise of money. They had but to see a thing—a trinket, a relic, a bit of sculpture—to demand at once the price and immediately to buy. Of course many things were not to be bought, and they would ask, “Why not? why not?” impatiently. Many of them seemed not to understand that even an unlimited purse is not always potent. They were wearing now in their lapels little flags of their country, and whenever a group of them assembled they were challenging one another to wagers on the chances of this or that competitor in the games.

Sixty thousand people crowded the seats and walks of the Stadium this day; another sixty thousand, it was estimated, crowded the hills which rose above the walls of the

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

enclosure. First there were the trial heats of the short race, a little more than one-half the length of the Stadium. One after the other, in the trial heats, the Americans, as was expected, came in victorious, except in the case of one German and one Australian. None of the Greeks secured a place for the final heat, to be run next day, and this largely because they were not sufficiently trained in the little details that count for so much in a race that is barely of ten seconds' duration.

After the running came the triple leap, the ancient contest at which in olden days the wonderful Phaylos excelled. In the trials it was the American, a Frenchman, and the Greek, Touferes, who led. Hoping against hope for Touferes, the Greeks awaited painfully the further results; but all their prayers availed not; possibly—who knows—as one said, possibly for the American prayers even as fervent were offered.

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

However, it was the American who won, and then ensued a scene for which, to have the honor to fall on one of themselves, hundreds of Greeks there felt that they would gladly offer up their lives.

The moment it was declared that the American had won, his name was elevated, the consolidated band broke into the first notes of the "Star-Spangled Banner," and at the same instant the flag of his country, beautiful with the alternate bright stripes of red and white and the little stars against the blue field, rolled and unrolled against the sky of Greece. The band continued to play, and everywhere the people cheered, while the countrymen of the victor, every one seemingly, mysteriously produced a small copy of that great ensign and waved it frantically aloft.

"How proud he should feel, that American," breathed thousands of throats fervently, and doubtless he did, the first

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

winner, after fifteen hundred years, of an Olympic championship. But there was small chance to see how he took it, proud enough though he doubtless felt, for he no more than waved his hand to a group of his countrymen ere he disappeared into the tunnel which led to the dressing-room.

And now entered Gouskous to contend in the discus-throwing. The rules were such as the Grecian officials conceived governed the contest of old. A designated attitude was assumed, and from that pose, with one forward stride within the square, the disc was hurled. From the first the enormous force of Gouskous was apparent. Apparently without pause or premeditation he grasped the disc, assumed position, and, with no more than a quick glance around and before, cast the missile from him. His lack of skill was evident, but his superior strength was believed sufficient to offset that, especially when the American, his

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

chief opponent, seemed to be casting the disc also unskillfully to one side. A great gain would have resulted could either have succeeded in throwing accurately down the centre line of measurement.

On the last try Gouskous heaved most valiantly, and a mark at least a metre beyond all others resulted. The audience was jubilant, and the name of Gouskous re-echoed resoundingly throughout the Stadium. The American was yet to throw, but no one anticipated a greatly improved performance, and so the officials made no concealment of the plaque bearing the name of Gouskous which they were about to elevate, nor of their own blue-and-white flag which was about to be hoisted triumphant. But the American had not yet thrown. And now in his preparation was seen evidence of that which was making his nation so great. He was not to be shaken in his preparation by the cheers of the tens of thousands for

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

the victorious Gouskous. Calmly he took position and coolly surveyed the prospect. His eye seemed to remain glued on a point far down the centre line. At the instant of execution a panic seized the Stadium. Suppose he should throw so accurately that the disc would sail straight down the centre line? Which was exactly what he did. No waste whatever in the cast—Gouskous was astoundingly beaten. The populace, in time, almost philosophically accepted their defeat. As one paper next morning put it: “Ah, well might the Americans say that their mixed blood was welding a nation that is to be invincible in time. Their vitality to-day in the games is but symbolical.”

But at the moment the Greeks were inconsolable. Again the American flag aloft, again the cheers of the victor's countrymen, again their voices ringing as the superb band played the strains of their national hymn.

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

Gouskous mingled in the joy of the victors—he could not help it—they were generous foes; but gloom was creeping on the Greeks, a gloom which deepened when at the end of the second and third days they had still no victory to the credit of their nation. And the night of that third day of defeat brought to Loues a feeling that he could no longer combat.

Still no sight of Marie, whom he now felt was lost to him; especially as Vanitekes, with whom he had yet to exchange his first word of greeting—Vanitekes had become unbearably insolent in his manner. It was true—all Greece said that on Vanitekes rested the hopes of the nation. But there was more than that to Loues. There was something in his rival's expression, or so he imagined, which was not to be accounted for by the admiration of the populace alone.

That night, when Loues was with his compatriots at the training quarters, when

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

he should have been asleep, he suddenly left his cot, and silently dressed himself. There was now no zealous friend to restrain him. Gouskous, his period of abstemious training past, was in the hands of his friends that night, had been for three nights now, explaining to them how it came about that his great arm did not win the undying glory for his country.

The mind of Loues dwelt not now on what interpretation might be placed on his flight. One more day, another night and it would be the morning of Marathon—they would be too engrossed in that to reflect overmuch on his absence. After all who was he? But one of sixscore. And was not Vanitekes the favorite? Was it not to be Vanitekes, whose picture graced every shop-window, that stared full-length from every paper? Was it not the wonderful Vanitekes who was to lead all the world?

And yet—who knows—the vanity of the

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

unpreferred champion was betrayed by his bitter smile—the race was not yet run. But he had to see Marie. Come what would of it, he would see her. He swung back the shutters and for a moment balanced himself at the ledge. He was not certain of the distance to be dropped, but what matter?

Even as he landed sprawling, ere yet he picked himself up he was praying that of whatever bones might be broken they would not be those of his legs. He would have need of them.

All the way Loues ran to Marousi, above twelve kilometres, over the uneven road. He knew that he should not be doing it—his country demanded and deserved better of him; but that inward torment, even as he reasoned thus, would not leave him.

Euripides, as if he had been expecting him, answered quickly to the knock on the door, but could not forbear a little grandmotherly scolding. “H-m—and so you are

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

come. I had begun to hope that Gouskous had dissuaded you. Yes, I have had more than one conversation with him about you. And you must have run all the way. And since you would come, why did you not ride, this night above all others?"

"Ride? Search for a carriage this hour of the night and have it all over Athens to-morrow? Besides I could come quicker afoot. The horses of our cabmen are over-worked these days."

"H-m-m—There's a strange mixture of wisdom and impulse for you! You're a lather of sweat. You did run all the way then?"

"I did. And would, had it been to Marathon itself."

"And been ready to turn about and run all the way back the day after to-morrow for the honor of Greece? Do you think you're doing well, Loues?"

"I think nothing, godfather—I care noth-

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

ing. This I had to do or fret my soul away ere morning. May I sleep here to-night? Or will you argue till I fly to the hills and sleep there till dawn?"

Euripides then must have seen what he never saw before in the boy, for at once he ceased scolding, and laying a tender hand to his head, which was feverishly hot, patted him as if he were a child. "Yes, Loues, turn in now. But here, first this—" and made him drink a cup of warm goat's milk. "'Twill make you sleep," he said, and sat by his cot, kindly smiling till the lad fell to slumber.

IX

IN the morning Loues was early awake. The feverish spirit was not yet wholly allayed, though the sleep had calmed him wonderfully. Waiting not for breakfast, he strolled forth. Toward Marie's house he went, but seeing no one awake he continued his way toward the hills.

Now hills and woods had ever an overpowering effect on Loues. He never beheld the uprising slopes of the one, nor gave himself to contemplation in the shades of the other, but at once whatever petty troubles beset fell from him like a cast garment. And so it was this morning. He lay on his back on a broad flat stone, minding not the moisture which everywhere dripped from the underbrush, and fell into soothing meditation. It was very quiet. Everything—

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

even the heart which for days before had been throbbing painfully was now deliciously quiescent. And lying there he reviewed all the years, the years and years, the beautiful years of his boyhood.

It was almost as if he had fallen asleep; and it seemed as if from out a dream, as if from out his dream of the days back there when they were playmates in that village of Marousi, that she came and leaned over him. And, as though if it were no dream he would know who it must be, he refrained from opening his eyes. "Loues," he thought she whispered, "Loues," and, doubtless thinking he was asleep, bent down and touched her lips to his forehead.

He forced lips and eyes to remain closed, but he felt that the warming blood must have rushed to his amazed face, for—if it were no dream—he felt her shrinking away, and he felt his temples, cheeks, and very ears and neck burn.

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

"Loues," she called again, more loudly, and he opened his eyes.

Perhaps three paces away she stood, leaning against a tree, and regarding him with an expression new to him; but calmly enough she went on: "From behind my curtain I saw you pass, and came after you, and found you here, and waited the longest time for you to awake. What brought you back, Loues?"

"To see you, Marie."

She neither smiled nor frowned; only knitting her brows, said: "And the race so near?"

"I know, but I could not help it. I had to come."

For a minute or two she remained silent, regarding him the meanwhile, however, with intentness. And then, "Have you had breakfast?"

"Not yet."

"No? That is good."

"Why?"



Three paces away she stood leaning against a tree.

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"Because I am going to confess and receive the sacrament. Will you come?"

He leaped to his feet.

"And receive the sacrament, too, Loues?"

"With you, Marie? That I will——"

She clapped her hands. Her face flushed, her eyes shone luminously. "It is true what Euripides maintained: 'Soldier or no, city or barracks——'" she ended suddenly.

But Loues, in a puzzle, had heard clearly. "What is it Euripides maintained? and why?"

"It is nothing."

"Nothing—then why——"

"Hush! I will tell you later—some time——" and would answer no more, but to herself breathed, "It is true, his is the clean soul, as Euripides said;" and turning to him, "Let us go."

And so to the little centuries-old church he went with her, and confessed after her, and received communion beside her.

"And for what purpose do you think I

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

offered my communion, Loues?" Mass was over, but they lingered in the church porch.

"To what, Marie?"

"To your success," she whispered.

"And I to your—but I will tell you later," he whispered.

She flushed vividly. "And now shall we go back and light a taper before the Blessed Virgin's shrine, also for your success?"

"For mine, yes—or for the success of a Greek—whoever he be."

"That is better and greater, for whoever it may be, so it be a Greek. But," she smiled timidly, "my prayers shall be for you, nevertheless. And now"—they had come to the road by now—"I must go home and you must go to your godfather's and have breakfast. And later I shall meet you and we will have a long talk over old days. And bring with you the new running clothes which Euripides has ready for you, those which you are to wear in the race."

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

And they met and went out into the sunlight and wandered far, and his heart was like a boy's again. And during all this time never a word of love, and yet every word making for love, and love alone. He was almost forgetting that ever a race was to be run next day; but the overthought of it was there and they both knew that soon he would have to leave for it; and began to talk of that.

The valley lay below them. No one was near.

"To-morrow you run, Loues?"

"To-morrow, Marie."

"You will run well, you think?"

"I think so, Marie."

"You will win, do you think?" She bent forward anxiously.

He did not answer.

"You doubt you will win, Loues?"

"Very much, Marie."

"Who then? Vanitekes?"

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

“Of all the Greeks I should name him. But when all the world is there; who could declare that this or that one will win—from among so many?”

“And you reflect on it calmly, you or no other Greek winning, Loues? Your coming into the Stadium to-morrow and—yet no Greek winning?”

He answered nothing to that until she spoke again. “What do you say, Loues? Doesn’t that thought trouble you?”

“It troubles me so much, Marie, that I hesitate to say how much. I am going to try to win to-morrow—going to try so hard that I expect to win or—” He smiled so calmly that she had no suspicion.

“Go on, Loues. To win or—” No suspicion a moment ago; yet now as she looked on him she began to breathe painfully.

“No, no, it is a sin to say it, to think it even, after taking the sacrament, too.”

“Never mind, to win or——?”

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

"Well, say—or drop on the road."

"Drop—insensible you mean, Loues?"

"Insensible? M-m——"

"You mean dead—drop dead, Loues?"

He said nothing.

"Loues!" she gasped.

For a long space they said nothing more, until again she spoke. "Loues, you've no token of me, have you?"

He drew out from his inner pocket a little leather envelope and showed her the faded rose-leaves and the blue-and-white rosette. "At least, Marie, I have been supposing they are from you."

She seemed pleased and took them from him and held them tenderly. "Let me keep them now, Loues—because you have carried them. And now, let me see the jersey which you will wear to-morrow."

Loues undid the little package. The beautiful suit of white silk, sleeveless jersey and trousers cut to fit above the

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

knee, fell out on to the grass. Marie held them up. "Are they not beautiful—the blue trimmings—Oh, oh—blue and white—our country's colors. And now, see, Loues—" She drew from her bosom a small silk Greek flag. "This I am going to sew on the breast of your jersey—so—" She spread it out to show him. "Will it not be beautiful? It *is* beautiful—our flag," and bending over, kissed it rapturously. The tears were in her eyes, and almost in Loues'. "And now, Loues, that flag for our country, but this—" she drew forth the knot of blue-and-white ribbon—"this for one who will pray that you will win. This we will place—where shall we place it?"

Loues reached over and took it from her and laid it on the jersey. "There, Marie—above the heart—" and that there would be no mistake, held a finger on the exact spot until, by a preliminary stitch, she fitted it exactly.

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“And ’twill be a happy girl returning to Marousi if on the breast of the first runner entering the Stadium she sees that knot of blue and white, and beside it the flag of Greece.”

Loues said nothing, because his tongue choked him; but in his mind flamed a picture of a victorious runner entering the Stadium. Vanitekes? Never! His heart jumped painfully at the thought, and yet, shame rose in him—Vanitekes was also a Greek.

“They say, Loues—” having put the last stitches to the ribbon, she was bending low to bite off the end of the thread—“it is reported that the rich widow, Madam—m-m—what is her name?”

“Madam Herikler?”

“Y-yes. It is—well, it is said that she has published her desire to wed the winner of the Marathon race—if he be a Greek—that is, bestow on him her wealth—and herself. Is it so?”

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“So they say, Marie.”

“And she is beautiful, they say.”

“M-m——”

“You have seen her?”

Loues nodded gravely.

“H-m—she has been to the Stadium to see the runners practise?”

“Oh, yes—frequently.”

“H-m— And she is rich, but—but—is she beautiful?”

“M-m—yes.”

“Ah-h—” sighed Marie. “Could a man be blamed? Rich, beautiful—” and went off into a reverie.

It was all like a reverie to Loues, almost a dream; but it had to end. The afternoon was fading, and they must be returning.

“Marie, I may not see you again until after the race to-morrow—win or lose—and yet if I lose——”

“If you lose, come to Marousi. I shall be waiting. Good-by.”

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“And if I win—suppose it, Marie—if I win?”

“If you win, Loues, it will be enough. There will be plenty to crown you. You will have no further need of me if you win.”

She smiled as she said it. Loues smiled, too, but bitterly, to think she could say it so easily.

“But won’t you come, Marie, by way of my godfather’s? Early in the morning he is to take me to Marathon, and you may not see him until after the race again.”

“Oh, I shall see him, his seats for the Stadium are near to ours. Only father and I go together, of course. Your godfather obtained seats near ours of your friend Gouskous.”

“Ah, Gouskous! You should see Gouskous, Marie, since he has come from the navy. A huge fellow, but a great soul too.”

“I have met him, Loues.”

“Where?”

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“One day in the Stadium. Euripides and I—we two went to see the athletes practise. It’s not your rich widows alone who take interest——”

“And where was I?”

“You had not returned from your practice on the road.”

“And you did not wait?”

“Oh, yes—and saw you, but you did not see me. Gouskous, now, he is one to waste a moment in chat with a friend; but you, Loues, no sooner in than off. No more than two or three circles around the track and away to the dressing-room.”

“Ah-h—I did not know, and covered with dust, I wished to get clean once more.”

“I did not mind the dust, Loues. A little dust does not blind us, Loues. But I see no sign of your godfather. And, oh, Loues——”

“Yes——” they were by then within the door of Euripides’ shop— “Yes, Marie?”

“Nothing. But don’t the men look hand-

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

some in their athletic clothes! One who never saw could not conceive that men could look so beautiful. We women are stiff and clumsy beside you."

"Ah-h—did you mark Gouskous, the symmetry for so large a man?"

"The symmetry—Ah, Loues, in that—" She did not finish the sentence.

Euripides had not yet returned, and the two were standing alone. Marie sighed. Loues stepped closer.

"This rose, Loues—" She held it up, fragrant, exquisite, as she herself—"I have been carrying it—and why? To give you for the dead leaves of that rose I took from you to-day. A rose, like—like—love—should be ever blooming—and yet even if it dies! No, I shall not pin it, but do you carry it so—" She bent over—her head was beneath his chin—he rested his lips on her hair. She looked up, said nothing, but looked at him. She was calm enough, ap-

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

parently, but he shook as with fever. She smiled and—it came over him—the hundred times this sweet day when, sitting beside her, walking beside her, his hand touched hers and he wished to clasp it, when her head bent toward his and his heart ached because he must not draw her to him—and the rush of passion overcame him—he drew her close and kissed her.

She did not lift her head, made no protest, and he in shame for himself drew away. To think of it! Only that morning he had received the holy sacrament with her, and already he had forgotten. He a man and she a girl—a weak girl. “Oh, Marie,” he whispered, and dropped his arms in despair.

Her hand resting on his shoulder patted him gently. There were tears, too, in her eyes, “It is all right, dear.”

“But you——”

“Me? There has never been any other and never will be now. And what matter,

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

so that you are happy? And now, good-by, and—" no further word, but raising her head, she kissed him, and ran off.

Ran off, but at the door turned, and oh, the look she gave!

Quivering, Loues sat down on his godfather's bench.

And there his godfather found him.

"What is it, Loues?" The old man touched the damp forehead, lifted the hot head.

Loues arose and stretched his arms, as if he would embrace the world. "Oh-h, godfather!" His eyes were flaming; to Euripides they flamed like the sword of an archangel.

"Ah-h!" murmured the old man. "Whatever brought it on, the purple light of youth is coloring the world for you now. Take care, Loues, take care."

"Oh, godfather!" He stretched his arms again and laughed with a ripple like a girl's

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

—like Marie's. "To-morrow, godfather—" and suddenly stopped.

Euripides waited. The boy said no more, but sat down with his head hidden again.

The old man patted him. "That's right. Do not say it, but think it all you please. It is the unuttered impulse which drives farthest and fastest."

X

OF all the candidates who assembled at Marathon on the morning of the race Loues was the last to arrive; and escaped not without some gibes as well as hearty greetings from his compatriots.

“Ola, it is Loues! So you tore yourself away? Who is it, Loues?”

“And does she live so far from Athens, Loues, that you had to leave a night in advance to see her?”

“Oh, Loues, you should have heard Gouskous trying to explain your absence. His imagination is as large as his body almost; but like the power of his great body he exercises it sometimes to no purpose. The director was not to be deceived. ‘It is of no avail, Gouskous,’ said he, ‘he has been moping for days, and he is off at last.’ In-

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

deed, but he will be rejoiced to hear that you have turned up at last; for despite his criticism he was grieved at your deception."

Only Vanitekes, lowering and preoccupied, had no word either of censure or affection. He pretended, indeed, after the first unwilling nod of recognition, that he saw Loues no more; and yet Loues felt often that his rival's glowering eyes were turned on him as if he would have liked well to know where it was he had spent the missing hours.

Loues had no mind to enlighten him, nor any other there. He took his light breakfast—he and Euripides had left Marousi before sunup—and after breakfast made his way to the shade of a tree, and there lay down. All thought he was asleep, but it was not to sleep he went. He was thinking of Marie. And lying there he felt but little concern about the race. Why should he—Marie's kiss still on his lips! When his

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

mind did revert to the trial it gave him no worry. A new confidence was in him. No longer did he feel distrust that he was doomed to fail in the very trying. He might be beaten; indeed it was almost certain that he would be, among so many, the pick of all the world over, but at least they would know that he was in the race.

There were yet several hours before the start of the race, and most of the competitors were resting in houses near by. It was a hot, breathless morning, and some could not sleep, either because of the heat or from nervousness. Loues after an hour or two of sweetest musing fell lightly asleep. And this outdoor nap—it was like a page from his old life. After a time he slept profoundly. Indeed, they had to wake him when it came time for the luncheon, which all partook of about two hours before the start of the race.

In this matter of luncheon there was much

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

difference of opinion. Some were for eating most sparingly, raw eggs in light wine, with a husk of bread; others not quite so unsubstantially as that, but still a light repast. Loues was of the opinion of a man from Ireland, who had no divided mind in the matter. "Gentlemen," he announced—Christovopoulos, a runner, translating it—"if from here to Athens is the same distance as from Athens to here, then 'tis a long road. And we'll be needing, I'm thinking, something more nourishing than fresh air in our stomachs before we see the Stadium again. Something good and substantial for me, and you can't cook it too soon to suit me, either."

A droll man the Irishman, a big man who declared that he should be throwing weights like his Greek friend Gouskous, with whom he had become a favorite—anything but long-distance running. "It's only self respect that's keeping me in it. 'Tis noth-

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

ing but torture I've endured since I first set my two feet in this ancient country."

He and a Frenchman vied with each other in practical joking, and it was comical to see how they made out to converse, each but half comprehending the language of the other.

"And who will drink with me to the health of our respective countries?" With a bottle of cognac under his arm the Frenchman until now had been vainly trying to induce some one to exchange toasts with his.

The Irishman at last said that he would take a sup with him—"For"—he turned to Christovopulous—"as your own poet says:

"'Tis blood and spirits gives us all our strength,
To these we add brave wine and food at length:
What man, though hero he, and strong
Without them lasts the whole day long?"

And so not to make a liar of old Homer,
I'll have to take one with you, Frenchie."

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

Said the Frenchman—"I drink to your success—after me."

"And you—here's to the long shanks of you running across the line first—that is, of course, if old Ireland has crossed before you."

The Frenchman was not content with that, but must seek to find others to drink healths with him, but thereat he was not oversuccessful. Here and there was a good-natured or a weak one who did. It was not that many would not like to, but they were not there this day to give appetite full play.

During all the parleying after luncheon Loues was busy in his own way. From a peasant near by he borrowed a needle and thread and a small square of cloth. With these he improvised a tiny pouch, inside of which he placed the already withered rose of Marie's, and hung the whole, like a scapula, about his neck.

At two o'clock the contestants were as-

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

sembled across the road in four crowded rows. In nearly all was apparent an intense nervousness. Some betrayed their dread of the ordeal by gripping and un-gripping their hands continuously; by lacing and relacing their shoes; by chewing on wisps of wood; others again rolling and un-rolling their hats. One would be continuously spitting out, another patting the ground with one foot; others again could not stay in one place but were running back and forth behind the aligned rows.

In the Frenchman the excitement showed in characteristic form. "Soon we go," he said, "but before we go one more health, one more. With you? You?" And so on with everybody refusing until he came to the Irishman, who pushed him along, but was at length persuaded. "For the glory of the sport then, Frenchie, one more hooker. And may the devil paralyze your legs if you bother me again."

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

All chafed under the dallying of the clerk of the course and his assistant, who seemed to spend an unconscionably long time in checking off the names. One after the other he read them, and as he called each answered. And such a list! More than a hundred in all, and from such far-away countries! Italy, Hungary, Austria, England, Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Spain, Ireland, Australia, America!

And then the clerk of the course, turning to the starter, said, "All is ready," whereupon the starter, an officer of the Greek Army, gave out the conditions of the race, first in French, and then in Greek; and, having done that, paused, and baring his head, addressed his own countrymen anew:

"The Greeks had this run inserted in the Olympic list," he said, "to commemorate the historic feat of the messenger who carried the news of the great victory of Marathon to the anxious waiters at Athens.

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“Which of us does not know it by heart? But it may be wise to rehearse it here. Know then that when the valiant Greeks had swept the field of Marathon their first thought was to get the news home. They sought a fleet courier, and found him in the person of a warrior who had fought all day against the invading Persians and who was even then panting from his exertions. This one was only too proud to be the chosen messenger—indeed, who would not be?—and at the word he was off, only disencumbering himself of his heavier armor. His great run was made with but one brief stop for refreshment on the way. He reached the market-place of Athens in an incredibly short time, turned to the multitude, spoke the one word, ‘Victory!’ and dropped dead.”

Here the officer’s voice choked, and for a moment he could not go on, and there were tears in the eyes of many others also. And when he went on, “And so may

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

it be with us of Greece to-day—victory or——”

“Death!” shouted several—Vanitekes among them. Loues did not shout, did not even whisper to Christovopulous, who was beside him, but his heart at the call leaped so convulsively that he was forced to press a hand to his breast to check its movement.

“Loues, Loues, you are pale,” whispered Christovopulous.

Loues smiled. The hand that had been pressed to his heart now caressed the knot of blue and white. The other hand was tucking inside his jersey the amulet with the roses.

“Twice blessed,” whispered Loues, smiling, “but oh, Christovopulous, this waiting is the most trying, don’t you think?”

XI

AN instant later warning signals were uttered, the pistol cracked, and the race had begun. For a few moments it was a great congestion of arms, shoulders and legs, but presently that was remedied. Even the most nervous and most unreasonable realized that the advantage of a few yards at the start was not likely to affect the result of a race of forty-two kilometres. Soon the runners settled smoothly to their task. There was evidence of a general desire to give as well as take.

All except the Frenchman took things more easily after the pistol cracked. He, with a backward look and a call of defiance, went off like a wild goat in the lead; followed, and this after a moment of hesitation, by the Irishman, leaping like the

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

puck of his own fairy tales to the challenging call, and by two or three less notable ones, who could see no better way to win this race than never to be far behind any leader, regardless of how that leader might act.

Behind that small first flying group came perhaps a dozen who proceeded rapidly enough, and with a moderation and judgment that boded dangerously for antagonists. Among them was Vanitekes. Behind that second group the men ran less compactly; in small clots of two, three or four for a time, yet so close together as to seem at a distance like one man; and here and there between these lesser bunches were many who ran singly, as if planning an independent pace, from which they were not to be diverted by the actions of would-be rivals.

Midway in the entire body were Loues and Christovopulous, the latter leading

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

Loues by a shoulder and himself led by a party of four, on the heels of the last of whom he almost trod at every stride.

Back among these undistinguished ones Loues was well content to remain for some time, in obedience to a plan which he had determined after some process of thought as this: There is a certain average of pace which a man may maintain throughout a long race. What that pace is each man must judge for himself. On the truth of his judgment would largely rest the outcome of his efforts. Should he fall away from that pace, he would lose distance that he might never be able to make up; should he go beyond that pace, he would so rapidly deplete his reserve stock of energy, which he well knew would decrease in geometrical ratio to the demand beyond the normal—deplete so rapidly that there would be no replacing it if an emergency should soon after arise. And yet local and temporary disturbances,

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

the force and direction of the wind, temperature, condition of the road, his own condition or distress—all would severally interfere with any set schedule of speed he may have made, and would have to be allowed for.

Far beyond any mechanical limitations or estimates it was more important to Loues that he have that clear knowledge of his larger self, of those inner feelings which inform a man far more accurately than any prescribed test of formula whether or no he is performing wisely; and no matter how distressed he might be he must not lose heart; and above all he must never quit.

All this was even more a matter of intuition than of reasoning with Loues, whose acquaintance with training for long-distance running had been acquired during his comparatively brief preparation for this very race; but he had pondered largely over what he had gleaned during this brief period

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

from the related experiences of many of the strangers while within the Grecian borders for this race also. Above all, he had learned from these strangers in these talks—and this was the most valuable thing they taught him—that the race was most likely to go, not most surely to the swift and strong alone, but to the swift and strong with whom nothing went wrong; that the most prolific source of defeat was the insane desire which seemed to possess men in the excitement of competition to run themselves off their feet, to give way to the temptation, to which mettlesome men particularly incline, to allow nobody to pass them unchallenged on the road, to be a leader at every stage of the race, even though in their overwrought minds was running a premonition that their course was leading to disaster.

Loues' notion of his own chances was that if nothing went wrong with him he *might* win, and therefore his main thought was to

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

see that no accident occurred, to see that he ran well up to his limit of endurance at all times, but never entirely up; above all never to strain to go beyond it, if he should be so fortunate as to remain in the running to the end. And nearing that end to forget everything, if it had to be everything, but run, run, on and on, and on again, until nature failed or the goal was attained.

And so he forged along at such a moderate pace as to win from acquaintances who passed him an objurgation to hurry up. Heeding no advice he continued to run with greater caution, forgetting not that for three-quarters of the distance to Athens the road was somewhat up-grade, and hence all the greater danger of cramps and other disabilities to whomever should overexert himself in the beginning.

The first of the race was entirely in the keeping of that wild Frenchman and his recently made friend, the Irishman. The

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

Irishman, accepting the Frenchman's challenge soon after they had freed themselves from the crush of the start, had said, "If nobody else will, then I'll go with you, Frenchie," and jumped up beside the Frenchman; and side by side the two ran, neither failing to beat time to a tread of the other with one of his own. Chck-k—chck-k—feet pounding the hard road for upward of twenty kilometres—they ran stride for stride; which was most foolish on the Irishman's part, for he was a heavy man, eighty kilograms, or about 175 pounds as we say; almost too heavy a man for a long race. And he with shoes (again the national carelessness showed) that did not fit him, but with every stride allowed the flesh and seams of leather to grind together, until long before they reached the half-way mark large blisters had formed on his feet, and from them the blood welled up above his shoes and spread over the instep.

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

This is mentioned in detail, because the story of the first half of the race is the story of the duel between these two men, the one short and slender and frenzied with liquor, the other tall and powerful and of a spirit that could brook no challenge, even though in accepting the challenge the future interests were sacrificed to the present vanity.

For all his moderation the first half of the race was not without its travail of body and spirit for Loues. There was the early troublous half-hour when the organs were striving to adjust themselves to the abnormal demands, when lungs and heart were pumping furiously, the lungs expanding as if they would never find room, as if they would burst the walls of his chest; and the heart, like the tightly enclosed piston-rod of some fiercely driven engine, ever seeking to burst through to where it might find freedom. But that was a slight matter and preliminary to the real work. That all were suffering in

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

much the same way, he knew; and plodded on steadily, keeping ever in mind the thought that it remained for him to hold the unfaltering but not overfeverish pace.

Some there were who did not go far in that race, who even at eight kilometres were forced by their distress to stop. And seeing them, idle spectators along the road, could not forbear to exclaim against their presumption in entering the race at all. Even Christovopulous could not suppress a word against these weaklings. Loues, also, might have had scorn for these feeble ones, but recollecting how it had been with himself in the trial when he, too, had almost succumbed early, he could not join his friend in this adverse judgment. They, too, might have had their trouble of spirit, of which none knew but themselves; and thereafter he found it not hard to spare a word of cheer or encouragement for the broken ones as he passed them on the road.

XII

TEN kilometres from the start Loues was no better than the thirtieth man in the race, but from that post on, as the others began to quail under the stress, he rapidly improved his position. Man after man he picked up and dropped. At eighteen kilometres he began to draw away from his friend Christovopulous. Thereafter he made no count of those he passed, but so frequently and regularly did he leave them behind that he was prepared for the news which greeted him as he entered the refreshment room at the half-way post. "You are tenth," said the man in charge, and most joyfully because of the Greek flag on his breast.

There it was that Loues found the Frenchman, who was sitting in a chair with his head swaying helplessly toward the table

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

beside him. His attitude was that of the utterly exhausted man, fagged in brain and body, completely dead to the fact that his chances for the race were gone.

“He had come in,” explained the keeper of the khan, “he and the Irishman, running wildly abreast, and he asked for a glass of cognac, and then another; after drinking which he sank into the chair, from which he was unable to rise, but there stayed, as you see him now, shouting gay songs senselessly.”

There, it seems, the Irishman himself, refusing refreshment of any kind, had demanded a basin of water for his bleeding feet, and then decided that there was not time for that. “Good-by, Frenchie,” he said, or so it was translated afterward, “good-by, and good luck to you, though you and your cognac-healths and your wild bog-leaping have been the ruin of me, I fear.”

This gossip Loues was treated to while hastily bathing his face in a wet towel and

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

rinsing his mouth with the juice of two oranges and as much wine as a man might put in a gill measure. Trickling down his parched throat that drink was like nectar, in which he could then and there have bathed in delirious joy, but no more than that meagre measure would he take.

Deliberately, it was remembered later, Loues absorbed this gargle. Nothing seemed to worry him that day. Indeed, even then he was wondering what Marie was doing at the moment. The khan keeper marvelled that he was not more disturbed. "Hurry, Loues, if you would hope to overtake them," though plainly his tone was not that of one who had the least notion that this lad had the slightest chance to win. "Hurry, there is the Irishman, the Australian, the American, and Vanitekes, and Georgandus of Crete and some others—nine in all before you—hurry, hurry."

To Loues it seemed as if another man than

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

himself were running this race. "How long ago was it that the soldier of Marathon paused here for breath?" he queried tranquilly. "Do not worry, friend—if it is in me I shall win. As the Irishman said—'It is a long road to Athens.' But now I go—adieu."

It was a picture of Marie before the altar in the church at Marousi that hurried Loues from the refreshment booth. Even now, doubtless, the multitude in the Stadium was awaiting anxiously for word of the runners.

Calmly enough for three kilometres or so Loues ran after that brief rest. Even on seeing one immediately ahead of him he did not increase his pace. If it were but a few kilometres that remained—but eighteen or twenty, that was another matter!

He passed that one, a countryman, and even then rolling from side to side in pain; but heeding not the advice of an attendant

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

who was beckoning him to rest a while. With the brief word, "Courage," Loues passed on.

"No, no, Athens," mumbled the poor fellow, and then seeing that it was a rival who spoke, groaned as if he would say, "And yet another who outruns me." Loues felt for him, but was unable to help him, except that half turning back, he tossed to the attending friend one of the peeled oranges which he had taken with him from the refreshment tent.

Somewhat farther on was a hill to ascend. Up the sides of it were now toiling three men. Loues used them to measure his rate of speed; and discovering that he gained on them his heart grew light within him. But if he gained much ground in the ascent, they made up for it on the descent of the other side. Reaching the top he saw them flying down, at such a pace indeed that one of them could not remain upright on his

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

enfeebled legs, but fell prone, and from there was unable to rise.

After the other two Loues went then, and making use of them as kilometre posts, to mark how the road was falling behind, he passed them on the next up-grade, which was slight enough, but too much for them after their foolish headlong flight down the slope behind. One of these was a Swede, who broke into raving as he collapsed, and, still shrieking, was carried to the shade of a convenient magnolia tree by two of the patrols.

There were five now before Loues. Came first a Hungarian, whom he overtook after a struggle that extended over two kilometres. He, too, crumpled up suddenly, but making no sound as he sank; only from out of the gray-white face, where the streams of sweat had washed away the dust, glowed two deep-set, shrunken, hopeless eyes.

Loues felt sorry for that poor fellow—

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

such a pathetic glance as he caught in passing; but his work lay ahead. Now was Vanitekes and at least another Greek before him. The Irishman he knew could not last, despite his enormous vitality and courage. For as he grew more tired, his weight would fall more heavily and pound his feet to pulp on the hard road. No flesh and bone could bear up under that. And so it proved. A turn of the road and Loues came on him suddenly in the hands of some countrymen of his who had come out on the road to greet him, and finding him in such a pitiable condition, were bearing him off bodily. As Loues passed they were forcing him into a carriage. He was raving and striking at them; but they insisted, and really it was humane. The marks of suffering on his face were touching, and his bloody feet thrust out stiffly from his struggling legs were painful to look at. Loues felt sorry for him, but it could not be helped, and surely it bright-

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

ened the outlook for Greece. The Irishman's friends gave Loues a cheer as he passed, and he replied with a wave of the hand.

It was Georgandus, the Cretan, who fell next. A broad-shouldered bulky body of a man, whom Loues remembered very well as a great patriot. He had come from his mountain fastness of his little island to run in this race. He was hardy as a stag, but again it was the story of a person too bulky to be carried over a forty-two kilometre course. A large man would need to be of superhuman endurance to do it, and, besides, men of medium weight or muscular development are apt to be toughest. He smiled weakly, did this Cretan friend, as Loues loped on.

And now Loues was aware of an immense fatigue. Had he given way to his weaker feelings he would have dropped beside the Cretan or rolled into the shade of the nearest tree, and there lain and given himself over to

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

sleep. He was as tired and worn as that. And this despite the power which he had, during the entire course, been husbanding so skilfully. He was sensible, too, of a great drumming within his head, which was not strange, as he had been exercising his brain full as actively as his legs since the race began; and the sun, too, was intolerably hot, and the dust from the trampled road was beginning to choke his mouth and throat so that he found difficulty in breathing.

But he remembered, and it helped to give him courage, that he was not yet in the forlorn condition which had been his during the trial race. He could go farther yet, and even at a more rapid gait if necessary. And coming onto the heels of the Australian in that frame of mind, he essayed a trial with him, who, poor fellow, could hardly lift his legs. One, Loues noted, seemed to be cramped. At Loues' coming to his shoulder he gathered himself together and ran on in the lead

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

for perhaps half a kilometre, by which time he was leading Loues fifty metres. And then he looked back. And by that Loues knew that he was overcome. The man who looks back in a race when there are yet some ahead of him has given up all hope of victory. He is striving only for a place. He would come back—and rapidly—that Loues knew. And so it was. Less than another kilometre and Loues was beside him, and this time the Australian suffered the Greek to lead him, and once in advance Loues found it no trouble to draw away, for though the other had it in mind to stay with Loues, his cramped left leg, which he carried bent at the knee, would not allow of it.

And now remained the American and Vanitekes, and the American fell to Loues at the next up-grade. The distance was proving too much for him also, for his style of running was not suited for a long race. He lifted his knees too high and he rose too

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

far on his toes to endure a long going. Every step he took was agonizing to him; and suddenly, even as Loues was studying him, he keeled over, and, after an attempt to rise, which he did once, to his hands and knees, he sank down on the road again. The dragoons lifted him, as they had done many another that day, to a carriage, and there he was as Loues passed. He knew Loues, even smiled at him; but such was his humiliation, nevertheless, that he was motioning the guards to draw off his jersey, on the breast of which he wore the flag of his country. That flag he did not want to be seen on him, as he, a defeated man, was being driven into the city.

“Truly,” thought Loues, “this pride of country, it adorns like a laurel wreath. No wonder the Americans are a great nation.”

And now but Vanitekes was before him; and if no accident happened the victory was surely to Greece. And, exulting, Loues

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

leaped on. Only eight kilometres remained and the steepest hills behind them. And they came to a village where was a great din, with Vanitekes still in the lead, perhaps here by a hundred metres. Along the entire road during the race had been a few scattered peasants here and there; but approaching the city the spectators were thickening, and now at this village they were in such force as to line the course solidly for half a kilometre. Here was also erected across the road a triumphal arch, and under the arch Vanitekes passed as a victor, the populace hailing him wildly. They had remembered well that he had won the trial race and that he had been hailed from the first as the chief hope of Greece. Some ran before him now for a hundred paces or more, casting flowers before his feet as he ran. Even girls in numbers did this.

And Loues, seeing that, began to experience a sinking of his heart. 'Twas not alone

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

that he felt jealousy; not alone as if the race were already over and this the ceremony of the flowers a tribute to the victor. It was not that alone. Here for the first time he began to fear that he might not finish the race. Another kilometre and he had not gained a foot on Vanitekes, who was still a hundred paces before him. Here again were villagers in force, and as Vanitekes drew near they handed him the victor's wreath of wild flowers, which he held in his hands for a moment and then with a significant gesture cast from him. They understood and bore no resentment; even cheered him. "Vanitekes! Vanitekes—Nike, Vanitekes!"

Nike, Vanitekes! Loues would see. He shook his head, as might a horse with entangling mane. He who first crossed the line in the Stadium would be the victor, not he who led at seven kilometres away, and with the vision of Marie waiting in the Stadium now not so far away, he set out deliberately to close

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

in on Vanitekes. He had been content to lag that hundred paces behind, but now he was in a fever to be beside his rival, shoulder to shoulder, elbow to elbow, and with him run stride for stride, till one or the other should succumb. And so, insensibly to the other, Loues drew up, and at six kilometres from the Stadium he was within ten paces, where he stayed for perhaps another half kilometre, when—it was at the foot of a long ascent—he began to move up to the other's shoulder.

Vanitekes heard the heavy breathing and turned. He was startled to see who it was. "You!" he exclaimed.

"Yes," replied Loues, whereat Vanitekes ran with lengthened strides until he once more led decisively—by twenty paces or more. Loues did not worry, nor hurry, at that. An inner intelligence told him that the other would fall back. And so he did presently, even though Loues did not increase his pace. Vanitekes simply had to

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

decrease his. And again Loues was at his shoulder and their hot breaths mingled.

But Vanitekes could not brook that. Again he ran ahead and when he had secured a good lead looked back; and by that looking back Loues believed that if his own heart but bore up he would get him; and soon was gaining again and presently was once more to his shoulder. And now, summoning all his energy and will, he for the first time in the race forced himself. And Vanitekes likewise forced himself.

Both were now exerting themselves beyond prudence. And now was the real race. All preceding this had been not much more than a test of physical stamina and endurance. Now it was a trial of spirit. Legs were trembling, knees were shaking, hearts pounding, lungs expanding to such an extent that the walls of the chest seemed as if they would truly burst under the pressure; and with that was a stew of muscle, nerves, and

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

flesh; as if the spinal column would dissolve and the stomach tumble in beside it; as if the eyes would melt in their sockets and the brain above go mad for very aching; and down the face, neck and shoulders and breast and back, over every square inch of the body, ran streams of not mere summer sweat, but of sweat that was salty, that smelt of dissolving blood, that was maddeningly thirstful where it touched lips and tongue. Respiration was becoming an agony, every lifting of the legs torture. 'Twas doubtful if the heart would stand it much longer—if the protesting lungs would not really burst their walls and let out at last the boiling blood. But this was for the glory of Greece, the love of woman, the proof of the better man, and so sometimes smiling, sometimes squirming, stride for stride, shoulder touching shoulder again, elbows knocking, the two raced up the incline.

And, arrived at the top of the hill, Loues

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

involuntarily paused: for Athens lay before them—Athens with, foremost, the ancient immemorial Acropolis and, secondly, the now glorious Stadium. Not that he could see the beautiful new structure, but the banners from the flagstaff he could see and the people on the hills about, and these evidently waiting.

Waiting for what? For whom? Why, waiting for—for sight of whomever first might reach the goal! And who would first reach it? For the first time in all the race the concrete picture of it stood clearly out in the fancy of Loues. For the first time he saw the actuality of the vision—himself first in the Stadium—himself or—he turned to Vanitekes—for the first time their eyes met fairly.

“Not you—” gritted Vanitekes.

“If not me, then you,” retaliated Loues. His throat was dry and cracked as any bit of the hot, parched road itself—he spoke



Athens lay before them.

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AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

with effort—"if not me, then you. If not you, why not me?"

"Never you," snarled Vanitekes, and after a moment, "Rather a Turk than you." And exciting himself incredibly ran ahead once more; and Loues, though he feared it was ill-judged, ran to overtake him.



XIII

AT eight o'clock in the morning of this last day of the Olympic Games there were five thousand people in line waiting for the opening of the ticket offices; this, even though the Stadium was not to be thrown open until the noon hour, and the exercises not to begin until two o'clock. Even more prominent than the calm English or the impatient Americans in this long line were the country people from the hills, and dressed in the national Greek costume, which for this festival seemed so appropriate, although some foreigners there were who seemed to think this costume a great joke.

“But why?” murmured Euripides resentfully. Euripides had arrived in Athens by ten o'clock, and with Gouskous was wandering about the streets of the city.

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“Why, Gouskous?” demanded Euripides.

“Heaven knows,” responded the great one. “Possibly because it differs from their own.”

“A foolish reason that. I know I am proud to wear it. Look, there is one—” Euripides turned, and to the stranger in question, one who was regarding him impudently, he flashed a gaze most insolent. “And I feel upborne in my opposition, Gouskous, by the recollection that centuries ago, when the greater part of Europe was sunk in the brutality of the primeval ages, my ancestors and yours were enjoying what these foreigners must even now recognize as a high state of civilization. Since then we have been conquered and degraded; but every great nation of the past had to suffer that, as every nation of the present will, almost certainly, in time; and so it is good to remember that once to be a Greek was to be an honored man. And I know that through the

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

minds of most of our countrymen there must be flowing some such idea; for they are bearing themselves, our peasants and shepherds of the hills, as though they were all chiefs and these upstart men and women in modern dress their vassals."

And truly, it was almost as Euripides boasted: to see them in the red fez with the tassel, the gold and black velvet coats, all back and no front, with the puffed-out white frilled satin shirt, the yards of white linen in folds; from the belted waist the great wallet hanging, and then the long black or white tight-fitting drawers, with the red slippers, stitched in colored threads and the gay blue pompon on the up-turned toe—truly these really seemed the only people appropriate to an Olympian festival.

Euripides and Gouskous found that the streets which led to the Stadium were jammed for a quarter of a mile from the gates. All people except royalty and the

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

athletes were compelled to halt their carriages and proceed on foot the last two hundred paces to the entrance, where a double row of soldiers saw that order was preserved and a number of officials attended to the taking of tickets.

At two o'clock, the hour appointed for the opening of the games, the King and Queen and attending royalty alighted within the double file of soldiers and proceeded on foot down the centre of the Stadium to the raised seats, which, covered with heavy red robes, had been set apart for them. There was then an immense concourse of people within the Stadium, and another immense body of people, too late or too poor to get seats, looking on from the hills about. The outer wall of the Stadium, the great marble circumference which separated the structure from the hills about, was gay with the head-dresses of the patient thousands who had perched there early that morning

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

to be certain of a point of vantage for the day. Above the wall were various flag-staffs from which floated the ensigns of all the nations represented by the competing athletes, and between were myriads of smaller flags with the larger ensigns repeated over and over again. Down below, in the centre of the Stadium, was the lofty flag-staff from which was to be flung the flag of the country of a victor, one after the other, as the events were decided. Just to look at it caused the heart of Euripides, and doubtless of every patriotic Greek there, to throb painfully and to wonder would the flag of Greece float from there because of any deed that day. And surrounding the immense flag-staff were a dozen of the best bands of Greece, three hundred pieces in all, consolidated into one harmonious body.

When the King and Queen were seated and all was quiet, a herald blew a long bugle call. A moment's awesome silence and then

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

the great band broke solemnly into the strains of the Olympic March, composed especially for the games. The people with uncovered heads gave a hushed attention, and that ended, hearkened to the Crown Prince, who, as referee of the games, delivered an address to the King; who, in turn, replied befittingly, and then the games began.

On that afternoon Marie and her father arrived early in the Stadium and took seats in the front row of that kerkide which was nearest the tunnel and almost opposite the line set for the finish of the race. Less than a hundred feet away sat the King and Queen. In the row behind Marie were Euripides and Gouskous. All four were thus assured a good view of whatever might happen. They came in good hour, but were amazed at the numbers before them.

At three o'clock, when the pole-vault, the last event to take place entirely within the

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

Stadium, was begun, upward of seventy thousand persons were admitted by ticket, and circulating around on the walk between the outer edge of the running track and the great marble base of the seats were several thousand more; and in addition to all these the wall above them was lined with an eager row of faces, so thickly set that not a patch of the white marble on which they leaned could be discovered at a casual glance; and the slopes and crests of the hills outside were also jammed with people. Altogether a hundred and fifty thousand men and women must have been there awaiting the outcome of the Marathon race. The pole-vault was still undecided (although there was but small doubt as to its termination, for the superior skill of the American representatives was shown in every move) when the word was passed that a courier was arriving with news of the race. He was soon seen, a dust-enveloped man on a bicycle,

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

and way was made for him. Soon his report was common property. He had been at the start of the race and had stayed with the runners until the fifteenth kilometre post was past.

“The Frenchman and the Irishman lead, then the Australian, next the American and Vanitekes together, with Georgandus, the Cretan, coming behind.” Marie caught up the echo, “Ah, the Irishman and the Frenchman, and another terrible American!” and sighed. But more hopefully spoke the father, remembering the confidence of their late guest. “But Vanitekes, he is strong. Wait yet.”

Marie sighed, and over her shoulder cast an appealing look at Euripides. Rather by her eye than her lips she asked: “And no word of Loues?”

Euripides shook his head.

Again another courier, and again the air full of gossip. This one had come from the

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

twenty-one kilometre post, the half-way house. There the Frenchman had collapsed; but the Irishman, the Australian and the American had run on. The Irishman, however, had been forced to halt in an effort to heal his bruised feet. "Ah," they sighed, "one fearful foe is removed."

"But the Australian and the American had run strongly together. Vanitekes and the Cretan were yet behind, but running boldly."

Marie's father, at word of Vanitekes, was moved to rise upon his seat and proclaim to his neighbors his opinion. He was but one of some tens of thousands who were similarly occupied. "Mark me," he announced, "this Vanitekes of Megara—he is a very goat."

"Zeito Vanitekes!" shouted those who heard.

A long wait followed, and the spectators watched the pole-vaulting competition, in

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

which was left only one Greek representative, whom they cheered incessantly, although it was almost certain he could not win.

At a quarter past four a courier arrived, and his message electrified the great audience. "At thirty kilometres the Irishman had been dragged from the race by his friends. Vanitekes then was but a short distance behind—in fourth place. But more—" upraised hands demanded silence—"at thirty-two kilometres the American dropped exhausted and the Australian had gone ahead. Only one man now between Vanitekes and the goal."

"The brave Vanitekes!" shouted Annie, and leaped into the air. "Zeito Vanitekes!"

"Zeito Vanitekes! Zeito Hellas!" cried the multitude.

Marie's father again leaped to his feet. "I know well this Vanitekes—he is my dear

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

friend," exclaimed Anninoe. All about hastened to utter words of esteem for the friend of Vanitekes.

"But Loues, where is Loues?" queried Euripides feverishly.

"Hush, listen—" it was Gouskous quivering—Euripides was on tip-toe. "Listen."

"Not far behind Vanitekes was the Cretan, and closing in on him yet another Greek, running bravely."

"Who, who?" inquired everybody, but the courier did not know. "He was so covered with dust that at the distance, one hundred paces, I could not tell."

"God give him strength!" called several. From all over the Stadium were uttered prayers for the unknown Greek who was coming on so bravely. Gouskous gripped the thin shoulders of Euripides, who turned to see the great eyes glistening. "Something tells me that it is Loues."

"God grant it!" breathed the shoemaker,

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

and Marie, unexpectedly turning, showered the big man with tearful smiles.

The silence became intense, painful. The Greek in the pole-vault failed in the final try, and the people groaned. "So will it be in the Marathon race, and our country will be dishonored," said voices everywhere. "Greece that in ancient times was——"

Again a courier. "I come from thirty-four kilometres," he announced, "and the Australian is beaten."

Such a yell! And then silence, followed by cries of "But who leads—who is it that leads?" while a thousand other voices implore, demand, threaten if silence is not held, and at once. "At thirty-five kilometres I looked back from a hill, and it was Vanitekes who led."

"Zeito Vanitekes!"

"Hush—hush——"

"And running two hundred paces away," resumed the courier, "was——"

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“Georgandus! Oh, the brave Cretan!” anticipated the masses, and cheered the name of Georgandus anew.

“No, not the Cretan, but Loues, Loues of Marousi!”

The heavy hand of Gouskous smote Euripides. “What did I say, friend?”

Euripides solemnly kissed him. Marie extended her hand. Gouskous took it in both his own and patted it kindly, bent low and brushed it with his lips.

And now a courier dashed in and whispered to the judges. But what it was, the judges would not repeat. Insisting cries rent the air, but the judges only shook their heads—“Nothing—nothing—” they repeated with upraised arms, but so despairing were their looks as they said it, and conferring among themselves so earnestly were they, that the people would not believe. And soon the rumor spread. “Vanitekes and Loues have both fallen—almost at the en-

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

trance to the city. Overcome by exhaustion after a terrific struggle up the last hill, they fell together and could not arise, and rapidly coming up then were a group of foreign runners—the Australian, the Hungarian with strength regained—a Swede—” and so ran the rumors, and the people relapsed into utter gloom.

Boom! and again boom!

“The runners are at the city’s gates.” The word brought the crowd to their feet. Their necks craned toward the entrance to the Stadium. There the excited movements of the jammed multitude and the sharp actions of the soldiers on guard indicated that the runners were near at hand. The last courier to precede the runners dashed in. All gave him passage.

“It is the American—one of those terrible people again!”

“Or the long-bounding Australian.”

“Or the great Irishman.”

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

“No, no; it is a Greek—Vanitekes—or Loues—I cannot say which.”

“Vanitekes of Megara!” and “Zeito Vanitekes, Zeito Loues!” roared the multitude. “Zeito Hellas!”

“God be praised!” panted Euripides. “Loues at last.”

“Way! way!” came in tremendous tones from the Stadium entrance. “Way! way!” and the soldiers, with their muskets horizontal, pushed back the surging crowds.

“They come! they come!” was the cry rising like waves of the sea. “And who is it?” roared the ones less fortunately placed.

“In the lead is one tall and light-bounding.”

“H-m—the American and the Hungarian are tall and the Australian——”

“Tall? Vanitekes! Zeito Vanitekes, thou son of Greece! Zeito—Hellas! Hellas! O Vanitekes!”

And in another instant they caught sight

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

of the figures. They saw through the dust, the grime and the sweat, the blue-and-white colors.

“It is a Greek! Zeito Hellas! Zeito!—a Greek who wins.” And into the Stadium, he came, streaked from head to foot and panting like an exhausted dog under the stress of it.

“Who—who—who—Loues or Vani-tektes?”

But Euripides knew. “Loues! Loues!” he gasped. “My little Loues, O little heart child! Gouskous, great friend, I faint.”

“Courage, father, courage—but a moment now.”

Marie gazed about from one face to the other. It could not be true. Loues? A dream it must be.

And the people? With his entrance between the gates of the Stadium they rose together and in an instant a hundred and fifty thousand Zeitos! rent the air, and a hundred

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

thousand little Greek flags flew wildly, and a hundred pure white doves were released and fluttered around the enclosure, from the seats on one side to the seats on the other; and wherever they alighted they were at once tossed aloft again, every one with a beautiful little blue-and-white ensign of Greece trailing from the beaks. Women cried and caressed one another. Men hugged one another, tossed their hats into the air, and did not look to see whether they came down again or no. Strangers grabbed one another and kissed cheeks.

And down the track came Loues, the hero of Greece. His eyes were deep-set—hollow they looked—and his mouth open as if he could not get breath, but his legs were moving, and through all his weariness he smiled. And with one hand he waved the flag of his country. Glory to Greece! Was it not magnificent! Soul-weary, his very marrow aching, it must be, but strength and courage



Glory to Greece! Was it not magnificent!



AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

he had summoned to wave the flag. "A man? No, a god! Soul of Homer, a god—yes."

"Loues! Loues! Loues!" It was like the ceaseless commotion of the surging sea, the incessant roaring, and the leaping and struggling multitude. "Loues! Loues! Loues of Marousi! Zeito! Zeito! Zeito! God in Heaven, but was it not a day!"

The Crown Prince, with Prince George the statuesque, and minor princes with the royal suite, rushed up to meet him at the entrance, and, circling about, they ran with him the last steps of the race, the length of the Stadium track, with arms extended, awaiting the moment when he should cross that they might grasp him. And as he passed along, men and women, young and old, ancient grandmothers and panting girls, leaned forward from their seats as if to draw him to them. The tokens they showered! Money, jewels, gold, one a diamond-studded watch. But to all this he paid no attention,

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

only as he crossed the line and his form was enveloped in a shower of rose-leaves, he turned to where he knew Euripides and Gouskous and Marie should be sitting, and, though he could not see them, smiled—the smile of a man who is tired to death, but such a smile that all who saw cheered for the blessing of it.

Not a step beyond the finish line was he allowed to run. They bore him off the earth, the Crown Prince and his suite. Carried him up the steps, lifted him up bodily and stood him up where was the King, who arose and shook his hand and gave him words of praise. And the Queen arose and took his hand—and he a Greek peasant—and told him what a wonderful thing he had done, and how Greece was proud of him. And the King, laying a decoration on the sweat-covered breast of his jersey, was about to pin it on, when Loues, looking down and noticing where, raised a protesting hand.

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“Not there, Your Majesty, but at this side, if it please you,” and on the right side the order was pinned. That heart side—that was sacred to Marie’s token.

And then the Queen placed in his arms a bundle of laurel, and Loues started for the dressing-room. And it was not until then, until he was almost in the shadow of the tunnel that led to the baths, and a mob about him were tearing the laurel from his arms—“A moment, a moment, O Loues!” they were crying—“A twig of that laurel that it may hang in my home an honored heirloom forever—” Not until then was he aware that the flag of Greece had gone to the top of the great flag-staff, and the great band of three hundred pieces was playing with wonderful energy the National Hymn, and surely a hundred thousand voices joining in. Not until then did the tears fall.

“Make way for Loues of Marousi,” called the voices, and they parted to let him pass.

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“You should well be happy, O Loues,” cried those about him, “for this day you have won the great honor for Greece.”

“Truly I am happy,” murmured Loues, and passed on through the tunnel.

Presently clear of the tunnel and treading the low-fenced path which ran to the dressing-room, he was seen by the people of the hills, they who had not the money or were too late to purchase seats inside the Stadium and who now rushed tempestuously down that they might approach nearer to the hero. “Nikhe! nikhe!” cried these, men and women both, and tried to grasp his jersey, or his hand to kiss it; but blushing he evaded them and ran to where the cooling bath and luxurious after-rub awaited him.

XIV

IN the inmost room of the tessellated marble baths, ushered there by the adoring door-keeper, was Loues, now welcoming the delicious streams which from a hundred perforations in the silver-mounted piping poured over his dust-laden body. Not ten minutes were passed since that wonderful scene in the Stadium, and he was still smiling like a happy child in a happy dream when in rushed Gouskous.

But, at the very door hesitated this Gouskous who had it in mind to overwhelm his friend on sight, yet now did not. For it was a transfigured Loues he saw. Vivid hues of joy, pale shades of weariness, the light of wonder—these and the essence of a dozen holy beatitudes illumining the face of Loues, made Gouskous pause at the door; for a long instant it might be, and then—reverence fled before mortal friendship.

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“Loues, Loues! to think that it is you—you who have won. I said it from the first; but to have it happen so—O great soul—” and rushed on him and gathered him, all dripping and lathered though he was, and kissed him, one cheek and the other, again and again, and the tears meantime running into his dark beard.

Loues, struggling, crying and laughing, too, called out, “But Gouskous, away from the shower; you will ruin—you have ruined your fine new uniform——”

“And what matter? A thousand such are reposing on dark shelves of the flagship. In a dungeon-like compartment below the water-line they are rotting away. Pff—mere money will buy them. But Loues, you Zeus descended, you miracle, what shall Greece say to you this day?”

What she had to say she said in no uncertain tones. Not that day alone, but for many days. Thus there were banquets.

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

At the royal palace for one place, during which all the visiting athletes rose and drank his health alone, and during which the King, after a long chat, asked him what he wished he should do for him, to which Loues answered that there was nothing; that he counted himself a fortunate one who brought a small merit to his country. And there were receptions and picnics by the royal princes; by various ambassadors and lesser dignitaries—mornings, afternoons—in one week more than two score. And a great ball, to which Loues did not go because in the meantime he could get no word in Athens of Marie, and he would not go where he might have other than his heart's desire for a partner. Everywhere he was proclaimed. Did he but drive through the streets—and during all that week he was not suffered to walk a step—everywhere the people cheered him. Nowhere his carriage appeared but it was tossing hats and loud

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

acclaims always, not alone by frenzied men, but by outspoken women also—glances of flame and words more than friendly. And his picture, large as life, in every shop window; and not alone his picture but that of Euripides, because he was Loues' godfather—by day draped in the national colors, by night decorated in white-and-blue electric lights; and never a window wherein his picture might be seen that the glass was not in danger of being crushed in for the pressure of the gaping crowd without. And when Euripides drove out with him he also was cheered and Gouskous likewise. And if the hero but entered into a shop to purchase a trifle, immediately the passers-by grew to the proportions of a mob, which had to be dispersed by the police before traffic could be resumed in the street. And he had no need to pay for whatever he purchased. One shop-keeper said: "All the clothes you wish for a year are yours, Loues." Another

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

wished to be allowed to furnish him shoes for a year; another linen; and so on—collars, handkerchiefs, hats, canes. Even the barbers said: Let us shave you. The very newsboys refused pay from Loues. His mere glance was an honor, his word of greeting a decoration.

But this was not what the soul of Loues pined for. He enjoyed it—every breath of it. He was beginning to understand that phrase of his godfather's the evening before the race. "The purple light of youth," his godfather had said. But when he was given an hour for reflection he saw what it might mean.

"Oh, Gouskous," he said—they had escaped for the moment from a brilliant reception at what was said to be the finest residence in Greece, and were now in the garden, in a shaded portion farthest from the house.

"Oh, Gouskous, I have had enough of this."

"Enough? but you are enjoying it."

"Enjoying it too well—altogether too well."

"Then what is wrong?"

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

“It is not good for me. These ten days past it has been nothing but adulation, worship almost, wine, entertainment—by men and women, old and young, friends and strangers—and it is not good. Me, a peasant who was merely fortunate. And who has not himself to thank, but his friends, his counsellors, his— Ah, Gouskous, it is what our friends and family have been to us that makes us what we are, is it not so?”

“True, Loues—our friends, our own people—they are the inspiration of victory.”

“Inspiration? Aye, the very *breath* of victory. And what have I done to requite them? Oh, Gouskous, but do you know during these ten days I feared at times that I would drift from them. There were hours when in my inflamed vision Marousi seemed but a most humble place. And not alone that but the monstrous thought has come that the companionship of the great ones of the world will afford me greater pleasure, joy,

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

an outlook on a greater life than Euripides—
or—or anybody in Marousi could give me.
But in other hours, thank God, I don't think
that. And now while I do not think it I am
going back to Marousi. I have learned,
Gouskous—I am not too young—that no
doubt he is a great man who meets and
conquers temptation, but he surely is a wise
man who turns aside to avoid it."

The strains of the music came to them
from the great mansion; soon came running
down the broad steps young men and
women, men of position, with decorations
on their breasts, women in low-necked gowns;
beautiful, clever, witty women—"Loues,
Loues, where is Loues?" they called.

The seekers were nearing the refuge of
the pair, but as yet they could not be seen.
Loues looked about—above. The marble
wall, without crack or crevice, twelve feet
in height, loomed up.

"Gouskous—a hand."

A N O L Y M P I C V I C T O R

Without a word, the giant placed a palm under the upheld instep. A spring, a shove, a scramble, and Loues was astride the coping. He looked down at his friend. "I go—at once—to Marousi. Good-night."

"But to-morrow, Loues, they are to present you with the purse of gold—the fifty thousand francs of gold—think of it, Loues! a hundred thousand drachmæ of our money; you will need never to work again. And to-morrow morning, also, the reception at the wealthy Madame Herikler's."

"There is one that the wealthy Madame Herikler will find much more to her liking when she comes to know him, Gouskous. She cannot help liking you, Gouskous. Everybody does. Good-night, great friend."

Gouskous heard the crashing of the bushes outside the wall. "Ps-s-t—" he muttered, "but such a passion for dropping from heights! I would not drop that distance to escape a million amazons."

XV

WITH flying feet, after the lights of Athens were behind, Loues made his way over the road to Marousi. It was his first step in a hurry since the race, and he never ran faster. In his impatience he made a short jaunt of the road to Marousi.

He appeared before Euripides; and slept in the little back room that night, and in the morning was early abroad; but did not call at Marie's house then. A day by himself in communion with the old primeval forces was what his instinct told him he needed ere he should look on Marie's face again; and in the quiet of the woods, in the breath of the hills, under the light of heaven that fever disappeared. Marousi tugged at his heart-strings now. Late in the afternoon he descended the hill and knocked at the door of Marie's house.

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

It was her father who came to the door; and, seeing the idol of the mob, bowed low. "Welcome, hero of the Marathon—welcome."

"It is no hero—" his eyes looked past the father—"no hero of Marathon, but Loues of Marousi who is come home again."

His voice trembled. "I've come to see Marie, if she will see me." The father, delighted, pointed the way, and Loues waiting till the father had retired, stepped noiselessly across the floor to the porch.

He saw her, sitting forlornly in the arbor of the little garden. He stepped nearer. His impulse was to fold her in his arms, but he still had doubts. After all, who was he that after ten days—? His fingers could hardly grip his cap, and he feared for his voice. But at length he managed.

"Marie!"

She leaped to her feet. "Loues—" and looked at him. "O Loues, Loues, but I thought you were never coming back," and

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

the tears ran down her cheeks, and he held off no longer.

And there they were found by the Committee from Athens, the Mayor of Marousi and Gouskous, with Euripides as guide. And they made speeches, and handed Loues a check for the fifty thousand francs, payment in gold, which check, after a single glance, he handed back.

“I ran for no gold.”

“What!” said the Mayor—who was also a capitalist—“a peasant’s wage for a hundred years, and all in one lump!”

“I care not if it were a King’s income—for a million cycles, I ran for no gold.”

“But what shall we do with it?”

“What? I care not. Anything but give it to me.”

“But you must say what—it is yours.”

“Then—m-m—endow some public building. Yes, that is it. Build a gymnasium with it, and encourage our youth to live as

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

did our people of old. They will be better men for it and Greece a greater nation."

"Ah, there were men then, and, please God, this will be a great step toward our having men again," breathed Euripides.

"And the wealthy Madame——?" inquired the Mayor.

Loues turned to Gouskous, smilingly.

"Ho, Gouskous! Ho, ho, Diagoras!" The Mayor poked the big one as little ones in power will. "Hah, I did hear something of that. You are to quit the navy, they say."

Gouskous glowered at the Mayor.

"It is true at least that soon I am to be given, by virtue of the influence of our Admiral, an honorable discharge from the navy."

And then the Mayor was for poking the giant again in the ribs, but Gouskous gently intercepted the hand. A slight grasp, a gentle pressure, and the Mayor thought his wrist would crack.

"Madame, Herikler has not, to my knowl-

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

edge, placarded her preference on the walls of Athens," said Gouskous, and a new dignity of manner swathed him like a becoming garment; after which the Mayor addressed himself more directly to Loues.

"And nothing we are to be allowed to do for you?"

"Nothing now," replied Loues "but later, perhaps, if I can have the water privilege of Marousi, which for so long has been vacant; if one politician proves to have no more influence than another, and you think, Mr. Mayor——"

"It is but a humble position, Loues."

"It will suffice. By it I can live. The time has come for me to settle down. I have been but a careless youth, but now I must work—" he half looked toward Marie—"or others will starve."

And so it came about. Loues and Marie were married in that same little church

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

wherein, on the day before the race, the two had received communion together. And the water privilege was granted him, and now any morning at dawn you may see him setting out from Athens with his little cavalcade, the four donkeys and four little carts, each loaded with the goat-skins of water; and if you follow him far enough you may see, long before you come to his home in Marousi, standing in the door the still young Marie, mother of his children; and those children, too—such as are old enough to be awake at that hour—you will see them come running down the road to meet him.

And Euripides? For the quality of his work Euripides is more renowned than ever. And commands great prices, for since the days of the Olympic Games he has been tremendously advertised; all without effort on his part, for the pair of shoes which Loues wore in the great race have become objects

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

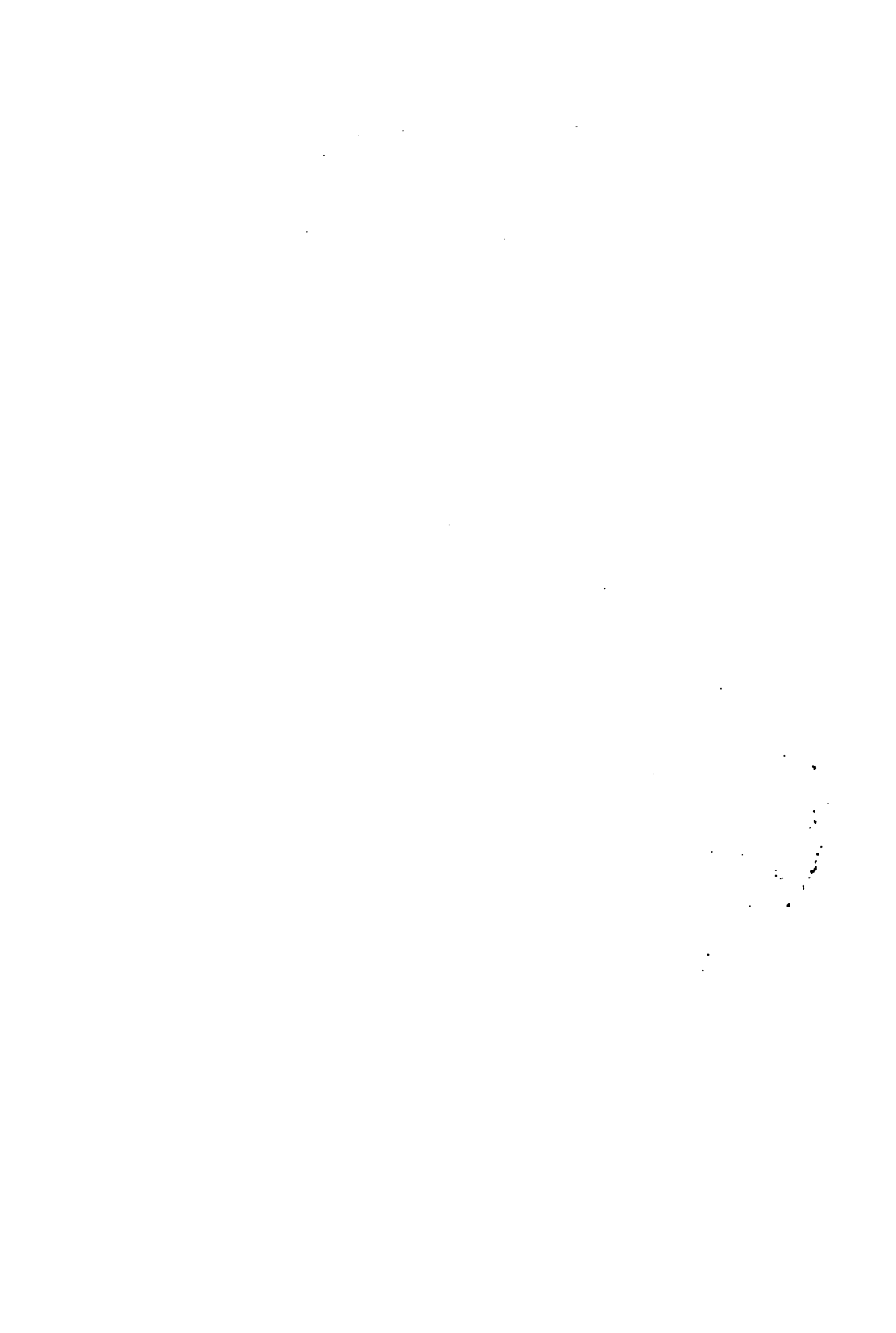
of reverence to Greece. And his time should be valuable, for he is one who trusts to no hireling, not a stitch from the time the green skin comes to his shop until the beautiful finished shoes go out that old Euripides himself does not begin and complete. And so his time *is* valuable, as he will tell you. He has now to work with a purpose; those children of Loues' and Marie's for instance. Even as he speaks there are probably two or three of them running about the shop. And he may even then be scolding them. But though his tongue may chide, his eyes will be regarding them rapturously. Those children—they must be looked after! The things they need!

And surely his time *is* valuable, but put to old Euripides, at any hour of the day or night the vital question, but let drop even the most casual comment on the overpowering subject, and at once all obligations are forgotten. The Mayor of Athens himself

AN OLYMPIC VICTOR

may be waiting—he will have to wait. At once are cast aside awl and needle, out from the glass case come the honored shoes, and away goes Euripides. And once again is rehearsed—and he goes clear back to the time that Loues and Marie, two wide-eyed little children, used to come toddling to his open door, and so on till it is all told, the story of that wonderful Marathon race which was so marvellously won by Loues. Ah-h—a man—for all his dreaming and gentleness, that Loues of Marousi! Aye—a man—Loues his godchild!





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